

WIDE AWAKE

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TOMMY BOUNCE.

BY PETER PAD.

CHAPTER I.

TOMMY BOUNCE is my hero; he is about ten years of age, the eldest of four, and as full of mischief as an egg is full of meat. His face was a study for comical expressions, changing with every thought, although if you could catch him quiet long enough to get a look at him you would find rather a good-looking boy.

But Tommy was known at home and among the neighbors as the mischief of the family; in fact, he was held responsible for nearly all the mischief that transpired in Stubbtown, the place where he lived.

If there was a calf's tail tied to her leg, or a dog found running at large with a tin-can tied to its tail, or a water-melon patch or orchard robbed, it was at once believed that Tommy Bounce had done it.

And the whollopings he got.

Why, if he did not get at least three of the me every day he 'd it that he had been slighted, or that he had been pretty dull.

Of course he got his jacket warmed once or twice a day at school, and at night when he came home his father would take him in hand.

"Well, Tommy, have you been wholoped to-day? Remember, now, tell the truth, for I shall be sure to find out—have you been flogged to-day?"

"Yes," he would speak up.

"Ah! you got it, did you? Now come here, come out here into the woodshed with me."

Tommy would follow with solemn honesty. He always looked both solemn and honest when he was about to have his jacket dusted, but he never flinched or cried, and would shew pluck to the last blow.

"Now, sir, you young rascal, come here, come and let me waltz with you a few minutes," his father would say, as he trimmed the knots off a hickory twig. What were you flogged for?"

"Jus' nuffin' at all."

"Careful, sir, don't you dare to lie to me or I'll skin you—what did you do?"

"Wal, sir, I jus' left a crooked pin in the master's chair and forgot it, an' he, the old fool, came in an' sat right down on it."

"Oh, he did, hey?"

"Yes; but he got right up again," said Tommy, while a broad smile overspread his features.

"He did? Well, now, I'll make you get up," and the old man would whollop Tommy as if he had been made of India-rubber.

He would forget it as soon as the smarting was done and be ready for some other mischief.

He had another brother, Jakey, who was called a much better boy. He used to join Tommy in many of his comical adventures, but everybody was ready to excuse him on the ground of his being led into it by his elder brother, and in this way Jakey enjoyed

his share of the fun and Tommy got the thrashings.

One day two hens were found with their legs tied together, and they were hopping around in a most mournful manner, one of them tried to go in one direction while the other wanted to go in the opposite. It was a comical sight indeed. One of them would attempt to scratch for such refreshments as hens find in this way, and to see the alarmed and confused beak of the other whose leg was forced to keep pace, was enough to make a pump laugh.

after which she caught the hens and untied the string that bound them together.

Tommy happened to be at least three miles away at the time, but no amount of protestations on his part could save him, and when he came home he had to have a basting for what Jakey had undoubtedly done.

But he got even with Jakey that night after they went to bed. He took some cow-itch along with him, and managing it carefully, he kept him scratching all night long.

Tommy was quite a genius. He could make all sorts of playthings, and get up more fun for his playfellows of a Saturday afternoon, than the whole school put together. Consequently he was a general favorite, although, perhaps no more on this account than because he most always came in for all the flogging.

But those who were inclined to regard him as simply a mischievous boy, were sure that he was destined some day to become a great inventor, so apt was he at all contrivances.

The schoolmaster's name was Whackem, and he was rightly named. He always went to school in the morning with a freshly-cut birchen rod, regarding it, probably, of as much importance as his text-books were. And it generally got well worn out before the day was gone. Tommy Bounce was not the only one of his scholars that a little tanning was necessary to keep them in proper pucker to learn their lessons.

This rod he placed in a hole in the wall, in such a way as to leave it extended over his head as he sat behind his desk, and one day a brilliant idea struck Tommy in regard to this birchen rod.

But he kept it to himself, and with the exception of a broader grin that settled itself upon his weather-browned phiz, those best acquainted with him would never have suspected that any mischief was brewing in his mind.

That day being Saturday, school did not keep in the afternoon, and so Tommy resolved to put his plan into operation.

Getting upon a rude ladder which he constructed out of a couple of fence rails, he managed to reach the spot where the rod of correction was held in its socket. With a strong knife he cut a hole through the clapboards right opposite to the one on the inside, where the rod was sticking.

In doing this he was enabled to carry out his plan, which consisted in going up into the loft of the schoolhouse, which was entirely unfinished, and lowering a string down between the boards on the outside, and the plastering inside.

Then he carried the other end of the twine along through the dusty attic, and dropped it down between the walls, directly over the seat which he occupied during school hours. It must be remembered that this old country schoolhouse stood entirely alone, and there was little to prevent anybody from gaining admittance to it at any time.

After arranging his twine in this way he went back



TOMMY BOUNCE ON A RACKET.

Well, Tommy's mother happened to spy them.

"Drat that boy Tommy, there's more of his devilment. What shall I do with him? Oh, how I will tuck the gad to him," she added, suddenly concluding what medicine was the best for his complaint.

Then she started to catch the hens for the purpose of untying them. The hens ran and squawked, the old rooster supposing that some of his neighbors had come over to interview his family, made a dash for the old woman just as she came suddenly upon the hens and tumbled over them sprawling.

Mr. Rooster flew at her and warmed her ears with his spurs and wings, kicked her in the nose, stepped in her right eye, pecked her scalp, tore her waterfall down, and in the space of about one minute made it so exceedingly hot for the old woman that she thought she was in the middle of the dog days.

But she recovered herself and drove him away,

to tie one end of the string to the butt end of the switch of correction.

Then he crawled in at the window, and going to his seat, the back of which was close to the wall, he pulled one of the sheathing boards partly off, so as to enable him to reach the other end of the string.

This he pushed through a convenient knot-hole in the board, and then allowed the board to spring back into place again. This arranged, he cut off the twine so close to the board that only a short end of it remained outside.

He now had direct communication with the awful birch switch.

Sitting upright in his accustomed seat he cautiously pulled the end of the string and the rod seemed to fall as if by magic. Tommy laughed as though trying to split his jacket as he thought of the fun he had in store.

But it did not work to suit him exactly. The switch would pull, but it would not rise to its place again, so he took a piece of elastic string which was attached to his "running ball," and climbing up on his ladder again on the outside, he fixed it in such a way that it kept the rod in place, and if made to depress by the action of the string the rubber band would instantly take it back to its place again.

Once more Tommy went into the deserted school-room and pulled the string. It worked like magic, and Tommy laughed until he was sore at the prospect of future fun.

During the remainder of the day his face was as red as a boiled lobster with suppressed laughter.

His father noticed it at night, and suspecting that he had been up to some of his capers he took him out in the woodshed and walloped him on account. He considered it safe and a good investment to thrash Tommy almost any time.

But still Tommy could not help laughing ready to burst. He went to bed laughing, laughed himself to sleep, and slept with a comical grin on his mug until morning.

The next day he grinned all the time, and his father tried to find out what the trouble was, but the little fellow kept his secret well, although he got his ears boxed several times during the day for failing to look sober on the "sabby day," as his mother called it.

However, he managed to get through the day and the following night. By Monday he had taken the sharp edge off his wickedness and so went to school in the morning with quite a sober face upon him.

Old Whackem, the schoolmaster, arrived at school that morning as cross as a bush-heap. Something had soured his temper, and, in order to sweeten it, he had cut a smart birch sprout for the benefit of all delinquent or mischievous pupils.

He had a chance to use it before he fairly got into his desk, for he caught three or four of the boys up to some deviltry or other, and went for them in the good old fashioned way that King Solomon speaks of.

"I'll warm ye, ye young vagabonds," said he, after tickling one or two of them. "Into the school-house with ye," and the urchins scampered towards the door like sheep. "Here, you, Tommy Bounce, what are you putting burrs in that boy's hair for? Come here, come here—you would not feel right without your regular good-morning switching," and he reached for our hero and made him skip.

"It's lucky I cut this twig, and I'll just lay it here on my desk and keep my eye on you young rascals," said he, placing it before him. "Here get quietly into your seats there," he continued, pointing to a lot of girls who were crowding and making considerable noise.

But quiet was soon obtained, and the regular order of exercises began. The boys especially knew by his looks that they must toe the mark pretty close, and so good order was had for some time.

One or two of the first classes had read and recited, and the old man began to unbend a little. Finally he took a seat at his desk, while the hum of the children conning over their lessons sounded like a hive of bees at work.

Presently Tommy pulled the string, and down came the switch that stuck in the hole, and gave the old pedagogue a good whack on his bald pate, and then instantly returned to its place.

The old fellow leaped to his feet and looked around. Everything was as it should have been; the scholars were busy with their studies, especially Tommy, who looked as innocent as a billy-goat.

No one had seen anything to all appearance, and after looking around for a moment he concluded that it might have been his imagination, and so sat down again to his work.

In about five minutes Tommy again palled the string, and once more the rod descended upon Whackem's head.

This time he could not be mistaken. He glanced up at the switch, but it was quietly in its place, and then he got up and looked carefully on the floor behind his desk to see if anything had been thrown at him. But he could see nothing that looked suspicious.

"Did any of the scholars throw anything this way?" he asked at length.

They all looked up, of course, and all protested their innocence, especially Tommy Bounce.

He was always very forward in claiming to be innocent, because he knew he was always suspected, whether innocent or guilty.

"Well, attend to your studies, and remember that I have my eyes on you; remember that I can see you whether I am looking at you or not," he added, resuming his seat.

"What are you doing, Tommy Bounce?" he asked, after eyeing him suspiciously for a moment.

"Studying my jography, sur," replied the lad.

"Well, see that you do, and remember that I have my eye on you especially."

"Yes, sur," he replied, humbly.

In a few minutes everything was going on again as regularly as ever.

Once more Tommy pulled the string, this time harder than ever before, and again the schoolmaster got a sharp crack on his bald pate.

He leaped angrily to his feet.

"I'll skin the boy who did that!" he yelled, dashing out of his desk and rubbing his head.

The scholars all looked up in astonishment.

Tommy almost burst with suppressed laughter. His face was as red as a beet, but still he tried to look honest and surprised at the strange behavior of the master.

"I'll give any boy a holiday that will tell me who did it."

"What, sir?" one little fellow ventured to ask.

"Some of you have been throwing something at me, and I want to find out who it was. Tommy Bounce, come out here," said he turning abruptly towards my hero.

Tommy's face grew a shade paler; but making it look as honest as he could under the circumstances, he left his seat and came out into the middle of the floor.

"Look at me in the eye, sir!" howled the old man.

"Yes, sur," replied Tommy, meekly.

"Did you throw anything at me, sir?"

"No, sur."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, sur."

"Let me see what you have in your pockets?"

"Yes, sur," said Tommy, commencing to unload.

He took out two tops, about fifty yards of string, two jack knives, a rubber ball, a sling, two or three dozen marbles, a dirty pocket handkerchief, and a few other odds and ends, none of which looked more than natural.

"Is that all?"

"Yes, sur."

"Turn your pockets inside out."

"Yes, sur," and he did so; but Whackem found nothing that looked suspicious.

"Well, sir, if you are not guilty you would like to be, so I will flog you anyhow," said he, reaching for his stick.

Poor Tommy was getting the bitter and the sweet pretty well mixed up. However, he received the castigation without a whimper, and returned to his seat, while the enraged schoolmaster wiped his brow, took another look around, clipped one or two others who looked as though they wanted to laugh, and finally resumed his seat again.

One of the lower classes in reading was soon after brought up and heard, but Whackem was all eyes for the culprit.

"It couldn't be that one or two drinks of hard cider would make me imagine that some one hit me, I'm sure it couldn't," he mused.

Not more than ten or fifteen minutes had elapsed before Tommy again pulled the string, and gave the old fellow still another clip on the head.

He jumped up again, but this time he did not lose his temper. He glanced at the stick, which still stuck in its accustomed hole over his head; he turned and looked out of the window, but still there was nothing to account for the mysterious whacks which he had received.

"It must be that I aren't well," he mused. "Never had these hot flashes in my head before. Wonder what makes 'em?—ah! there is another one," as indeed there was, for Tommy had given the string another pull. "Guess I'll dismiss school and go home to bed. 'Fraid I'm going to have a bad turn. Yes, I will—attention! school is dismissed for the day; I don't feel well. Come again to morrow," said he, putting his books away.

There was no occasion for his using a speaking-trumpet or firing a gun to attract the attention of his school for such an announcement as this. In two minutes they were all outside of the school-house, shouting and manifesting their delight.

Tommy Bounce was too full to laugh. He started for the common and threw himself upon the green sward and rolled in ecstasy, while his companions watched him in surprise.

Then, after rolling around for a few minutes, he began to laugh, and finally got rid of his long pent-up feelings and felt better. And yet he did not dare to tell any of his friends of the trick he had played, for fear they would "give him away," and so he was forced to enjoy it all alone.

The next day the master came as usual. He had experienced no more "hot flashes" in his head, and so concluded that he was better.

He called school to order and proceeded with the business of the day as usual. But ere long that avenging switch again came down upon his head. Of course he leaped to his feet and again sought an explanation for the mystery. What could it mean?

He looked in all directions, and finally reached up and took down the birchen rod. He experienced some difficulty in pulling it from its socket, and, lo! when he did so, about fifty feet of twine followed it.

Tommy saw at a glance that his game was up, and so he tried to look extraordinarily honest and deeply engaged in his lesson.

Whackem kept on pulling the twine from the nook until at length he had it all in. He did not make any inquiries, but he sat down and began to ponder over the subject. What the dickens did it mean, anyhow?

* The conundrum proved too much for him, anyhow.

So he gave it up for the time being, and resolved to wait and watch. He may be watching and waiting now, for aught I know, but he never could find out what that string meant or whether or not it had anything to do with the "hot flashes," which he experienced. So Tommy escaped in triumph from the consequences of this piece of mischief.

Tommy's father owned a dog, or rather Tommy did, for the animal was with him the most of the time, and seemed to enter heartily into all of his pranks and mischief. He was a large, strong dog, and at last Tommy resolved to turn that strength to some account, and at the same time have a little fun.

So he went to work and made a little four-wheeled wagon to harness him into. Then he found portions of his father's harness in the barn, which he ingeniously cut up and made a dog harness; and it was a long time before his father could make up his mind about what had become of certain straps that belonged to his old mare's working gear.

It took him some time to perfect everything, but the little fellow had lots of pluck and ingenuity, and such a thing as giving up anything that he had once undertaken never entered his drowsy head.

But at length his turnout was completed, and Carlo harnessed up. It took some time to break him to harness, but Tommy was the boy to do it, and before long he had him in complete subjection.

Then he was happy. He drove all over the village with him, and attracted much attention. But the mere sport of driving his dog-horse and riding at full speed did not satisfy him for very long.

So he proceeded to learn him nice little tricks, which he taught him to play at the expense of others. His playfellows had always wanted to drive the team, but he would never allow them to do so until now.

One afternoon, after he had perfectly trained Carlo in his tricks, he allowed one of his playmates to take a seat in the cart and drive. No sooner had he taken the reins than the dog, seemingly as full of fun as his young master was, started down the road as fast as he could go, while the driver swung his hat and cheered lustily.

Arriving at a muddy place in the road, Carlo wheel'd suddenly around and tipped the poor fellow heels over head into the mire.

Such a sight as he was, and the way the boys laughed at him was fun alive.

Of course Tommy insisted that the fellow did not know how to drive a dog, or anything else, and the others joined in with him.

Then another boy attempted to show the first one that it did not require much smartness to drive a dog, and so he took a seat and started over the same course.

And he had the same experience, for when Carlo reached the mud puddle, he turned suddenly as he had done before, and dumped experimentor No. 2 into the mud, where he rolled over several times before he was enabled to get out.

Then the boys began to smell a rat, and to see that Tommy had played a joke on them. But he insisted that he had not, and to convince them of it he took a seat in the little wagon and drove over the same route without meeting with any mishap at all.

This, of course, greatly surprised them, and one of them said he would try the ride and run the risk. But Carlo still remembered his lesson, and, in fact, he seemed to enjoy the sport as much as any of them, and he gave a yelp of delight as he started off. When the mud puddle was reached, Carlo had the pleasure of tipping the third boy into it, and turning back to where Tommy stood, he ran barking towards him.

But it cured the boys completely, and none of them ever asked to ride behind Carlo after this experience.

One day Tommy's mother forbade him from going away with the boys, and told him that he must stay at home and play with his little sisters.

Now, this did not please him much, but, however, he made the best of it and harnessed Carlo for the purpose of giving the little folks a ride.

He tipped them over two or three times, and got as many "hidings" from his mother to pay for it, until at length he resolved to be "honest Indian," and treat them to a good long ride.

So he started off into the pasture, and the little ones were delighted. The oldest one was very much like Tommy in many respects, and enjoyed anything that was lively or exciting.

Presently Carlo gave a peculiar bark and started off in the direction as hard as he could go, while Tommy vainly attempted to hold him back, and to make him remember that he was still boss.

But Carlo wasn't considering just then. What it was that excited him so strangely Tommy could not see, but presently he saw right ahead a fine rabbit, kiting it for dear life, while the dog was going for him regardless of consequences.

"Whoa! Carlo, whoa!" he shouted, at the same time pulling hard on the reins.

"Yip! bow, wow, wow, yip!" was the only reply the dog gave as he dashed over the rough way after his victim.

Finding that neither his strength or his entreaties would curb the dog, he contented himself with bracing back in his wagon and holding on to the reins with all his might.

"Hang on, Dolly; hang on, Peg," he shouted to his little sisters who, by this time, began to manifest considerable alarm.

Just then the wagon struck a rock, and the youngest child bounced out like a rubber ball.

Tommy had enough to do just then without stopping to see if any bones were broken, for Carlo was

gaining on the rabbit at every leap, and was now close upon him.

CHAPTER II.

We left our hero, Tommy Bounce, holding on with all his might to the reins, while his dog was plunging headlong after the rabbit which he had started while quietly giving the children an airing in Tommy's cart.

Over rock and hill, through gully and brake, flew the earnest dog, while the cart was sometimes on its wheels and sometimes in the air, all the while gaining on the rabbit.

Tommy held on like death to a nigger.

One of his little sisters had already been bounced out, and picking herself up was now on her way back to meet her mother, who had only just discovered the situation of affairs, and had mentally made up her mind to just peel the hide from that part of Tommy's body usually used to sit down upon.

A moment more and the rabbit leaped over a log, in its natural anxiety to get out of harm's way, but the dog was close upon it, and also leaped the log, just in time to catch the wild runaway, and just in time, also, to bounce the wagon against the log, and smash it as though a mule had kicked it two or three times.

The wreck was complete.

Tommy's sister went keeling over like a broken doll, and he went spinning head-over-heels, but still holding on to the reins with desperate energy. In fact he landed on the log just as the rabbit landed in the dog's mouth. But still he held on while the dog proceeded to chaw up that rabbit, and his little sister came gamely up to see what was going on.

"Lick him!" said she.

"Chaw him!" said Tommy.

But the dog needed no prompting.

That was a dead rabbit about fourteen seconds after it stopped running.

"Bully boy!" said Tommy.

"Dood dordy!" chimed the sister.

The dog appeared to know that he was both a "bully boy" and a "dood dordy," and after shaking the last spark of life out of the rabbit, he turned around and placed it in the body of the wagon, as it lay up against the log, and then turning and looking up in Tommy's face, he looked, as much as to ask: "How is that for high, rabbit pie?"

Tommy patted him on the head, and at the same time, with his other hand, visited several places on his person that felt sore and needed rubbing.

While thus engaged his mother came up.

"Thomas Bounce, I'm going to skin ye!" she shouted, shaking her fist at him.

"Don't ole gal; skin the rabbit," said he, rubbing his leg.

"What's that you say, sir?"

"Rabbit. See!" said he, pointing to his trophy.

The old lady approached and took a look at the game.

"What's that?"

"That! Why that's a rabbit, don't you see?"

"Rabbit! I'll rabbit you: it's only more of your deviltry."

"No, it's Carlo's; but think what a nice stew it'll make."

"Stew! I'll flog you raw," said she, going for him.

Tommy dodged behind the log.

"Don't you dare to run away from me. Come here till I skin ye!" said she.

"No, mother, I want my skin; but you may have the rabbit skin if you want one very bad," keeping all out of the way.

"Oh, you just wait till I get hold of you."

"Of course I will, but"—

he made a dive for him, but he was too quick, bounded over on the other side of the log.

Come here, Thomas Bounce."

the little sister dodged around, as if to get between Tommy and her mother.

"I'll take every spot of hide from you!" yelled the irate parent.

"It's most all gone now, ole gal," said Tommy.

"I'll fix ye."

"But only think of the rabbit."

"Hang the rabbit! only let me get hold of you." She made another dive for Tommy, but the boy was again too quick for her; and in endeavoring to catch him she lost her balance and tumbled over the log, and fell sprawling over on the other side.

Tommy saw his chance, and, seizing the rabbit, he started on a run for the house, followed by the dog with the remainder of the harness on him.

As it happened, his father had returned from work, and was standing at the gate; Tommy held up the rabbit as he approached.

"See here, pap, how's that for high?"

"Why, Tommy, a fat rabbit. Where did you get it?" asked the old man.

"Me'n Carlo caught him."

"Good enough. It will make a splendid stew, and just what I wanted."

That settled Tommy's hash. He knew that so long as he had his father all right he need have no fear for his mother.

The old man took the rabbit and proceeded to skin it, all the while praising his boy for his fortune.

Tommy's mother came up soon afterwards, and her wrath was still at fever heat.

"Look here, Nancy," said her husband, "see what Tommy has caught."

"That arn't all he'll catch," said she, at the same time making a dive for him.

Tommy ran behind his father.

"Hold on here, Nancy; what's the row?"

"That boy's pisen," she hissed, with clenched teeth and fists.

"Pisen! who pisened him?" asked the old man, getting up from his work.

"He sassed me awful, the varmint!"

"Hold on, Nancy."

"I can't, Josiah."

"But what's the trouble?"

"That boy sassed me. He took the children out to ride in his dog cart, and the confounded dog started for that rabbit."

"But Tommy wasn't to blame for that," said Mr. Bounce.

"I couldn't hold him in," pleaded Tommy.

"Of course you couldn't."

"Ob tourse he touldn't," put in his sister.

"But he sassed me."

"How?"

"He got out of the way when I wanted to skin him," she replied, earnestly.

"I don't see as anything needed skinnin', Nancy, but the rabbit, an' I'm 'tendin' to him now."

"All right, Josiah Bounce, I'll remember this agin you. What show is there for bringing up our children in the way they should go if one parent goes agin the other?"

"That's so, Nancy, an' if you think he needs a hidin', why, hide him, that's all," replied Tommy's fond father.

"So I will. Come here, Thomas Bounce," said she, starting towards him again.

"Oh, ah! Look there," said Tommy, pointing towards the house.

Tommy at the same time started for the orchard near at hand, and climbed up an apple tree, where he secreted himself.

There was no fire, or any signs of one, save in the stove.

"Where is the little rascal?" asked his father.

"He's skipped, I'll warrant ye. It was only a contrived lie of his'n to get away."

The old man laughed quietly, but his wife saw him.

"What are you laughing about, Josiah Bounce?"

"Wal, I war thinkin', Nancy, that Tommy made a fool of us pretty cute."

"But that won't do. He must be flogged."

"It war putty smart, though, Nancy," replied the father, as he proceeded to finish skinning the rabbit.

"Oh, yes; you more'n half encourage him in his

pranks, an' I tell you we'll have to answer for it. Spare the rod, spoil the child, Solomon says, you know."

"Yes, Nancy, but if you can't find the child, what y're goin' for to do then?"

"Josiah Bounce, you're actually backslidin', I verily believe."

"Do you think so, Nancy?"

"It looks that way, Josiah, when you 'low your boy for to fool ye an' not skin him."

"Wal, all right, Nancy. You jes take this ere rabbit in an' make a stew for supper, an' I'll find Thomas and hide him," said he, handing the dressed rabbit to his wife.

Thus appeased, she took it, and started for the house, while her husband, with a half-comical smile on his phiz, turned away towards the barn.

The old man was just as ready as anybody to "larrup" Tommy, but somehow, taking everything into consideration, he couldn't find it in his heart to "go for him" now, and so he proceeded to do his chores about the barn, all the while maintaining that same smile upon his face.

Tommy was so situated that he could see that smile on his father's mug, and he was smart enough to know that it didn't mean a flogging for him, and so he made bold to come from his place of concealment and approach him.

In an instant his parental mug changed from a broad grin to a frown as Tommy approached.

"How dare you, sir, sass your mother?"

"I didn't sass her."

"Well, how dare you tell a lie an' say the house was a-fire, an' then run an' hide?"

All Tommy could say was:

"Wal, I didn't do nuffin."

Notwithstanding his father's good will on this particular occasion, he felt that it was his duty to give Tommy a cuff at least, just to show him that he didn't approve of something or other.

But my hero got away much better than he expected, and accompanying his father into the house, from which the vapor of the rabbit stew was already coming, they found that Mr. Dull, the circuit preacher, had arrived and was on the point of announcing himself as an all-night guest.

Mr. and Mrs. Bounce were delighted, and for the time being Tommy was forgotten, although he did not forget himself by any manner of means.

But of course Tommy and the other children had to wait for their rabbit stew until their parents and the preacher had partaken of what they wanted. The little folks held a meeting outside of the kitchen door, and Tommy presided.

"We won't dit a taste," said the oldest sister.

"Nary a snootful!" chimed Jakey, in a mournful tone of voice.

"The old rooster!" said Tommy, with firm set teeth.

"Only think how dood it smells."

"An' Carlo caught the rabbit too."

"Carlo an' I, an' what business has that old bible-whanger to eat it all up?"

And then in a chorus they snuffed the fragrance of that rabbit stew, and growled at the prospect of getting none of it.

"If he does eat it all up, I'll fix him," said Tommy, doubling up his hard little fists.

While they were thus deliberating their mother came out and called them to supper.

They scampered in without loss of time, but the moment they were seated they saw that the rabbit stew was all gone. Not a spoonful was there left, for the preacher had traveled a long distance and had an appetite like a coffee mill.

Mr. Bounce and his guest retired to the spare room, where they sat with full bellies, talking on a variety of topics, but without once thinking that they had left only bread-and-butter for the hungry children.

"Where's the rabbit stew?" asked Tommy.

"The parson and your father eat it all up," replied Mrs. Bounce.

"And been't we goin' to have any?" asked Jakey.

"No. Rabbit stew is not healthy for children. Eat your bread-and-butter and ask no questions."

"Old Dull's a fraud," said Tommy, angrily.

"Thomas Bounce!" exclaimed his mother, dropping her knife and looking at him in surprise.

"He is, and I'll bet on it," said Tommy, and the others appeared to join in the denunciations.

"Thomas Bounce, you shall have the hide all peeled off you this very night. I shall tell your father of your actions," said she.

"Wal, I don't care, I'd rather be skinned than have no stew."

"Eat your suppers, and don't let me hear anything out of your heads," was the last command, which they all trembled at but Tommy.

They made the most of the dry supper that was left them, and shortly afterwards Parson Dull came in and held family service.

Tommy was kneeling near Parson Dull as he poured forth his thanksgiving for the good things that heaven had showered upon him.

Now Tommy had Carlo trained, as we saw in the opening chapter, and had brought him to such a state of perfection that he seemed almost human in his instinct.

He appeared to understand Tommy's very thoughts. In one particular he was unfailing.

If Tommy spat upon his hand and placed it upon any object, Carlo would grab that object and do his level best to capture it for the benefit of his friend Tommy.

Carlo was in the family group as it knelt in evening thanksgiving.

He was crouching near Tommy, and when the Rev. Dull was in the marrow of his thanksgiving, Tommy touched him, and then spitting upon his hand he placed it upon the sitting-down portion of the Rev. Doctor Dull.

In an instant Carlo was on his feet, and comprehending the wish of his friend, he seized the minister by the slack of the trousers, including just meat enough to make it lively for him, and began to pull and shake like all get out.

That thanksgiving prayer for rabbit stew came to a sudden termination.

"Ho! Hee! Murder I!" shouted the Reverend Dull, springing to his feet.

Carlo held on and bit hard.

"Wha—what's the matter?" asked Mr. Bounce and his wife, springing up.

"Take him off! Take him off!" shouted the circuit preacher, dancing around the room like a demoralized clothes-horse.

"Here, Carlo! Come here!" shouted Mr. Bounce.

"Take him off!" said Dull.

A smart kick from Mr. Bounce made the dog release his hold and leap out of the window, for he knew that mischief had been done.

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated Mrs. Bounce.

"The varmint! I wonder what set him up to such a caper?" asked Mr. Bounce.

"Only to think!"

"Goodness sakes alive! I was never startled so in my life. I thought the old evil one grabbed me surely," said Parson Dull, rubbing the most bulky portion of his body with much energy.

"The bare idea!" ejaculated Mrs. Bounce.

"Tommy," said his father, approaching him sternly, "do you know what made Carlo bite the parson."

"No, sir; I was listenin' all the time," said Tommy, meekly.

"Thomas Bounce, if I only thought"—

"Honest Ingin!" replied Tommy, holding up his hands, expressive of the most honest feeling.

"If I only thought for a minute that"—

"Hope'r die"—

"Well, it's well for your hide that I don't know for certain," said his father, following the parson to the spare room.

The moment Tommy found himself alone with his brother and sisters, he proceeded to stand on his head, and both his brother and sisters began to follow his example.

"Where's Carlo?"

At that moment the dog leaped in at the window from which he had made his sudden exit after putting such a sudden period to that thanksgiving

prayer for rabbit stew, and the children welcomed him with every demonstration of delight.

The dog actually seemed to understand and appreciate the fun as well as any of them.

"Good boy, Carlo! You fixed him, didn't you?" said Tommy patting him on the head.

Just at that moment Mrs. Bounce returned to the room, and they all looked instantly sober, while the dog again leaped out of the window, and was out of harm's way in a twinkling.

"Now, children, you must go to bed," said she. "You, Thomas, must sleep with Elder Dull."

"I don't want too," replied Tommy.

"Why not?"

"Because he's an' old snoozer, an' ate up all our rabbit stew," said he, savagely.

"Thomas Bounce, if I hear another wicked word out of your head to-night, I'll have your father take you out to the barn and peel the hide all off of your body. Do you hear?"

Tommy made no reply, but went sullenly up stairs to bed in the front room, where the elder was to sleep.

It was more than an hour before Elder Dull came to bed, and during that time Tommy was wide-awake and thinking.

This thinking brought an idea which Tommy at once worked upon.

Outside on the window-sill there was a paint brush that his father had used the day before.

Tommy took it up and pondered over it for some time. Then he stole down stairs and got his mother's shears.

This done he proceeded to cut the bristles into very short particles and strew them in the bed, on the front side where the elder was to sleep.

After fixing things in this way he placed the brush back against the window-sill, and carried the shears down stairs and then placed them in his mother's work-basket where he had found them.

Then he returned and got into bed as honestly as though nothing had happened.

"Eat up all my rabbit stew, will he?" muttered the boy, as he snuggled into his own cosy place on the back side of the bed.

Pretty soon the elder came up, preceded by Mr. Bounce with a candle.

"You will have to sleep with Tommy," said he.

"Oh, I don't mind that at all. Tommy is a very nice boy," said the elder, taking off his coat.

"Yes, he's a right nice boy, and I've got great hopes of him," replied Mr. Bounce.

"Well, I'll bid you good-night."

"Good-night."

"Good rest."

"Thanks. Good-night."

The good man left the elder alone and started down stairs.

The elder proceeded to disrobe himself for bed, and again kneeling, he probably finished that thanksgiving for the rabbit stew.

After this was concluded he blew out the candle and got into bed.

Tommy pretended to be asleep, but he wasn't, to any great extent.

The elder grunted, and finally fixed himself in a comfortable position for a comfortable sleep.

But hardly had he done so, before he began to scratch. This he attended to vigorously.

Then he turned over, and tried the other side.

But that other side didn't appear to serve him any better than the other. Again he began to scratch.

"Strange, what's the matter with me?" he muttered, while Tommy stuffed the sheet into his mouth to prevent him from laughing out loud.

"Guess I must have caught the itch or something."

Then he rolled over on his right side again.

"Gracious, I seem to be prickling all over. What can be the matter with me?"

In the meantime he was jumping about in the bed and scratching with all his might.

After tossing and scratching for fifteen or twenty minutes he got up and lighted the candle, after which he proceeded to examine his body with great care. Tommy was just at the exploding point, and held in with the greatest difficulty.

"Don't see anything wrong, only a little red," muttered the elder, as he turned around before the light of the candle. "Maybe I'm a little nervous."

"Maybe you are," thought Tommy.

"Guess I am. That dog nearly scared the life out of me. Wonder what made him bite me so. Gracious! There are the marks of his teeth," he said, whirling himself around and catching a posterior view of himself in the glass.

After settling it in his mind that it was only nervousness, he returned to bed again without blowing out the candle. This was only an experiment to see if his nervousness returned again.

"Poor Tommy, he sleeps well," he mused. "No nervousness or anxiety troubles him. Oh, what a blessed season is healthy childhood!"

He smuggled himself down as though resolved to sleep in spite of nervousness, but before many minutes he began to scratch again.

First on one side and then on the other he turned, but still the prickling, itching sensation continued. Then he turned over on his back, but still he had to scratch. Then he lay on his belly to try how that would work. But still he itched and scratched.

After enduring it for some time, he got up again and looked at the sheets.

But the bristles that Tommy had cut into such short pieces were white and did not show. In fact, they had worked themselves into the meshes of the cloth in such a way as to be hardly felt with the hand.

He looked long and carefully, but was utterly at a loss to account for the strange sensation which he felt whenever he lay down.

"Tommy! Tommy! wake up," said he, shaking my hero, sharply.

"Wha—wha—what's the matter?" asked Tommy, sitting up in bed and rubbing his eyes in the most honest and natural manner in the world.

"Tommy, do you feel anything?" he asked.

"Feel anything, sir? I feel happy," said he.

"Do you feel any prickling sensations?"

"No, sir. What's the matter?"

"Well, I hardly know; I feel a strange prickling sensation whenever I lay down," replied the elder.

"I don't know," replied Tommy, sleepily.

"Well, I maybe imagined it," replied he, after a moment's deliberation.

Then he blew out the light and once more tried to find comfort between the sheets.

For a few moments it was a success, but he soon had to resume his scratching at a more lively rate than ever.

Finally he was obliged to give it up and go down stairs for consultation with Mr. Bounce.

It was arranged after a long consultation, that he should pass the remainder of the night with Tommy's father, while his mother went up stairs to take his place with Tommy.

As may be surmised, this arrangement brought peace and tranquillity to Elder Dull, but Tommy's mother got into the itching sheets that the good minister had just left.

She rolled and tumbled for some time in her endeavors to find repose, but she seemed to have the itch as badly as the elder did.

Then she got up to investigate.

Tommy still appeared to sleep soundly.

She looked at the bed, then at herself. Then she seized Tommy by the ear and dragged him out upon the floor.

"Thomas Bounce, what's the matter with you? Tommy picked himself up and looked wondering around.

"What?" said he.

"What's the matter with you, sir?"

"I'm awful sleepy, that's all."

"What have you been doing?"

"Sleepin'," replied Tommy.

"What have you put in this bed?"

"Only myself. Why, what's up?"

"I'm up, you varmint!" said she, again seizing him by the ear.

"Oh! oh! What's the matter?"

"You've been up to some deviltry."

"What's that, mamma?"

"What's the matter with this bed?"

"Nuffin as I know of."

"Thomas Bounce, I've a mind to peel the hide all off of you."

"What for?"

"What have you been doing?"

"Sleeping, that's all."

"But that itch?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Oh, if I only was sure of it?"

"Don't you wish you was?" thought Tommy.

"How I would wallop you."

"I don't know what you mean."

"Well, get back into bed again, and if ever I catch you doing anything again, I'll pull the skin all off your body."

"I don't know what you mean, mammy."

"Go to bed, quick."

Tommy did as ordered, but his mother, although she was anxious to wallop him, could not find a reasonable excuse for doing so. She tried again to find comfort between the comforters, but as the itch got the best of her, she at last took a quilt, and wrapping herself up in it, she made a bed upon the floor, and succeeded at length in getting to sleep.

And so did Tommy, but he had a good laugh before doing so.

CHAPTER III.

In the last chapter I left Tommy Bounce just going to sleep, after having played several tricks on Elder Dull and his mother.

It will be remembered that the elder had eaten his rabbit-stew, and that he had set the dog on him while at prayers (in thanksgiving for that very same stew), and afterwards, by the aid of some finely cut bristles, had made the bed so uncomfortable for him, that he was obliged to give it up, and exchange places with Tommy's mother.

The old lady attempted to sleep in the bed, but was obliged to give it up and sleep on the floor, while Tommy enjoyed his side of the undoctored bed in peace and quiet.

The next morning she got up early and left Tommy asleep, but he was awake soon afterwards, and, remembering what he had done, he proceeded to cover up the tracks he had made, by hiding the sheet that had been charged and prepared with the bristles, and putting another in its place.

This done he went to the room where his brother Jakey slept, and told him all about the fun he had had, and how completely he had "got even" with the hungry elder for eating up their rabbit-stew.

"Tain't half enough," said Jakey.

"What else can we do?"

"Wish his old horse would run away with him!"

A new idea seemed to strike Tommy.

"All right; you just wait and see."

Breakfast was over, and again the elder held family prayers, thanking goodness for all the bounties and dainties they had received.

Then conversation upon secular and general topics began. The elder at length turned to Tommy.

"How did you sleep last night, my son?"

"First-rate," replied Tommy, innocently.

"Well, how I did envy Tommy last night," said the elder, speaking to Mrs. Bounce. "He slept as calmly as a flower at evening, while I was so nervous that I could not sleep."

Tommy's mother looked at her young hopeful savagely, as much as to say: "If I only suspected that you cut up some caper, how I would trounce you, you young mischief."

"Oh, we all sleep well in childhood!" said his father.

"Yes, it is a blessed season."

"What a pity we could not always enjoy it."

"Ah! the good Lord knoweth what is best. He gives us our burdens, and we must bear them manfully if we would win the crown. But, do you know, Mr. Bounce, I have taken a great fancy to Tommy?"

"I'm right glad to hear you say so," said the proud father, "and I believe you. He is a right smart boy,

and I have great hopes of him. Do you know, elder, he is a great help to me, young as he is?" and he drew Tommy between his legs.

"Not the slightest doubt of it, I can see that he is very smart. Does he go to school?"

"Oh, yes. I believe in giving boys a good education, and then the path of life is easier to travel."

"You are right, Brother Bounce."

"Why, he is a great genius. He can contrive anything under the sun."

While this conversation was going on, Mrs. Bounce was clearing away the breakfast dishes and every now and then casting hard looks at Tommy, whom she suspected strongly of knowing more about why she and the elder could not sleep in the bed than he had admitted.

"I don't doubt it. He will be a gentleman yet," said the elder.

"And as for horses, why he can manage a horse as well as I can."

"You don't say so, and such a little fellow, too."

"It's a fact. Tommy, go out to the barn and clean off the elder's horse, and then put on the bridle and saddle, and then bring him up to the door."

"All right," replied Tommy, starting away towards the barn with a bound.

"Can he do it?" asked the elder, with earnestness.

"To be sure; why, you don't half know that boy; just wait till you see how he'll bring your horse up to the door."

"Ah! be careful of him, Brother Bounce, for heaven has placed a great responsibility upon you." Let us now turn to Tommy.

Jakey accompanied him to the barn, and they at once proceeded to clean off the elder's horse.

This could only be done by the aid of a barrel which they placed beside the horse, so that they could curry and rub him off.

After working for some time they finally cleaned the beast and, as he had already partaken of his breakfast, they proceeded to place the saddle and bridle upon him.

"Now then, Jakey, I have it," said Tommy.

"What?"

"Hush! Go out to that chestnut tree!"

"Well."

"And get a nice burr."

Jakey danced with delight and started.

"Now I'll fix him! Eat up all our rabbit-stew, will yer," he asked, between his clenched teeth.

Jakey soon returned with a beautiful burr and handed it to Tommy.

"That's all right," said he. "Now we'll put the saddle on."

It was no easy task for the boys, but after working about five minutes they succeeded in doing it, and a lively chestnut burr was carefully placed under the saddle and everything arranged in the most satisfactory manner.

Then Tommy led the horse up to the door where the elder and his father stood waiting.

"Ah! Look at that!" said his father.

"Why, who would have thought it?" said the elder, looking at the horse.

"Oh, I tell you he is a very smart boy."

"And you should be very proud of him," responded the elder.

"Indeed I am."

Mrs. Bounce was all the while attending to her duties and keeping an eye on the movements of her hopeful son, Tommy.

"Well, I must be going, Brother Bounce."

"When will you come this way again?"

"In about a month."

"Well, good-bye," said Mr. Bounce, extending his hand.

At that moment Mrs. Bounce came out upon the porch.

"We shall expect you to call on us the next time you come this way, Elder Dull," said she.

"Oh, certainly, I shall be most happy."

"Allow me to assist you," said Mr. Bounce, taking the horse by the bridle.

"Thank you."

The elder placed his foot upon the stirrup and leaped into the saddle.

Then there was a sensation.

The horse leaped and cavorted and began to rear up on his hind legs.

"Whoa, Tobias, whoa!" said the elder, trying to keep his seat.

"Spirited horse you've got, elder?"

"Spirited! Why, I never knew him to show so much life. Whoa, Tobias, whoa! What's the matter with you? Whoa!"

"Oh, he's only feeling a trifle frisky."

"Frisky; you must have fed him a good big measure of oats."

"Well, only the same as I give my critters."

"Whoa, Tobias, whoa! What's the matter with you? Whoa!"

All the while the horse was prancing around the yard like mad, and the elder seized him by the mane to prevent his being thrown. He was thoroughly astonished, for he had never seen his horse show such spirit before, and he did not know what to make of it.

Tommy and Jakey were watching the performance with much interest.

"Whoa, Tobias, whoa!" the elder kept yelling, while working hard to keep his seat.

At length the infuriated animal started down the lane towards the main road at a fearful rate of speed, while the elder was grasping the mane with his left hand and his tail with his right to prevent being bounced off.

Mr. and Mrs. Bounce watched him until he was out of sight around the corner of the road, and that horse was doing his level best to escape the torment of that chestnut burr.

Tommy and his brother went around behind the house, and as usual proceeded to stand on their heads, as they always did whenever anything tickled them particularly.

"What can be the matter with the elder's horse?" asked Mr. Bounce.

"It seems strange, but between you and I, Josiah, it somehow seems as if that awful varmint of a Tommy had something to do with it," replied Mrs. Bounce.

"Law sakes alive, what could that boy have to do with the elder's horse being uppish?"

"Well, what could he have had to do with that bed so as neither the elder nor I could sleep in it? I tell you he's a bad boy, an' he needs skinnin' every day in his life."

"Oh, I guess not," replied the father.

"To be sure, you guess not. What did Solomon say about sparin' the rod?"

"Yes, I know; but what has Tommy done?"

"I don't know, but it somehow seems very strange to me that such things could happen."

"Oh, you are 'cited, wife. Tommy is all right. Did not you hear what the elder said about him?"

"Well, it may be all right, Josiah, but I don't believe it. You know that he's up to all kinds of mischief, an' no knowin' what tricks he may have played on the elder."

"I'll go an' ask him," replied the fond father, starting away.

"Mighty sight of good that'll do yer, Josiah Bounce; he won't own up to it, of course."

"I'll fix him, never you mind," called back Tommy's father.

In the meantime the elder was plunging down the turnpike road, with one hand on the horse's main and the other grasping his tail, all the while yelling:

"Whoa, Tobias! Whoa!"

But all the while that chestnut burr under the saddle was playing the mischief with Tobias, and after going at this uncommon rate for about a mile, he proceeded to "buck," and threw the elder sprawling into the mud.

Thus freed, he proceeded to run as fast as his legs would carry him, until finally a farmer who was driving along the road stopped him and took him back in search of his rider.

The elder wasn't hurt, only to look at.

But he didn't look a bit good. Tobias had seemingly chosen the very muddiest place he could find on the road in which to unload his rider, and to appearances he had taken extra pains to sop up all the mud there was on his clothes.

The farmer knew he was the owner of the horse the moment he came in sight of him.

"Are you hurt?" he asked.

"Not much, I—I—but my clothes," said the elder, jumping up to meet the man.

"How did it happen—did he fling ye?"

"Yes, the very old boy seems to be in him this morning. Whoa, Tobias; whoa, you varmint!"

"Tobias! why, I know that name—you arn't—you don't go for to tell me that you are Elder Dull, do you?" asked the farmer, starting back in surprise.

"Yes, thank goodness, I'm Elder Dull."

"Lord save us, elder, how you look! Why, you're mud from head to foot."

The elder paused to look at himself. Had he been standing before a mirror, he could have formed a better idea of how he looked, and it is doubtful if, with all his pious gravity, he could have helped laughing at himself. One side of his face was covered with mud, his hat looked like a used-up accordion-bellows, his clothes were completely covered, and in all respects, he looked like the last rose of summer badly trampled.

"Excuse me, elder, if I laugh jist a little, but the fact is, you look awful comical."

"I suppose so. Come here, Tobias, you rascal, what's the matter with you?" he asked, seizing him by the bridle and giving him a jerk.

"Maybe there's something wrong about the saddle," suggested the farmer.

"Maybe you are right, let's look."

With this they unbuckled the belly-girth, and the farmer pulled off the saddle. Neither of them saw the chestnut burr that dropped. The farmer took a long look at the under side of the saddle, and then at the horse's back.

"Why, elder, no wonder the horse kicked and rear-ed; look at that sore," said he, pointing to the spot made sore and red by the burr.

"Sakes alive! How did it happen, I wonder?" asked the muddy elder.

"Something the matter with the saddle, I guess. Now you go right back to our house an' tell the folks all about it, an' my son Ebenezer will fix it all right, an' you can wash up an' fix yerself."

"Thanks, I guess I will do so. Whoa, Tobias!" he added, giving the bit a savage jerk, although the poor beast was doing nothing at all, only being thankful for the removal of the saddle.

"Let me put the saddle back again, an' you can lead him to the house; it's only a few rods. The folks will be glad to see you."

"Thanks," said the elder.

The farmer threw the saddle across the horse's back, and just then Tobias put in an objection.

He wheeled around and gave the farmer a kick that sent him sprawling into the bushes that grew on the side of the road.

"Whoa, Tobias! Whoa, you son of iniquity?" yelled the elder.

The farmer grunted and picked himself up.

"Did he hurt you?" asked the elder.

"Yes, consarn his pictur, he nearly knocked the wind out o' my body. Oh, oh!"

"Whatails the critter? Whoa, Tobias, you varmint whoa! Do you want to be mauled?"

"He's tender on the back, elder. Better carry the saddle and lead him to the house."

This being considered the proper thing to do under the circumstances, the elder shouldered the saddle, and taking Tobias by the bridle started for the farmer's house.

"I'll be hum in 'bout an hour, but Mahitable—that's my wife—she'll make you comfortable."

And so they parted.

How he was received, how the horse was taken care of, and the saddle fixed, there is no occasion to chronicle. Suffice it to say that it was all that man and beast could ask, and that in good time the elder resumed his journey, still in ignorance of what had caused him all his troubles.

The farmer who had assisted the elder stopped at Mr. Bounce's house and reported the occurrence.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Bounce expressed the greatest regret, and wondered what could have got into Tobias.

Tommy and Jakey overheard the conversation. They were just starting out for school.

"Wonder if he don't want some more rabbit-stew?" asked Tommy of Jakey, and they both started away laughing.

"Thomas Bounce, come back here!" shouted his mother, who had observed his conduct. "Here, Josiah," she said to her husband, "bring that boy back and skin him."

"What for?"

"I'm sure he played some trick on the elder's horse."

"I can hardly believe it."

"No," said the farmer. "There was a sore under the saddle, and that's what made the critter worm about so."

"Oh, if I was only sure of it," said Mrs. Bounce, turning back to the house with clenched fists.

"Go on to school, Tommy," said his father, after the irate and suspicious mother had retired.

After the boys and the farmer had gone, Mr. and Mrs. Bounce held a consultation.

She would have it that Tommy knew something about all the trouble that had been made for the good elder, although she could prove nothing. But she succeeded in working upon her husband until he looked upon Tommy as the secret author of it all.

At night Tommy returned from school.

As usual he had earned a good "hiding," and had been paid in full by the teacher.

His father at once took him in hand.

"Have you been larruped to-day, sir?"

"Yes, sir," sniveled Tommy, who knew that another larruping awaited him.

"What for; what did you do?"

"Just nuffin at all, sir."

"Oh, of course, you never do anything. What did the teacher flog you for?"

"There was a skunk in his desk, and"—

"A skunk in his desk?"

"Yes, an' he said I put it there, an' he licked me," replied Tommy, looking like an abused innocent.

"No doubt of it, you rascal," put in his mother.

"No, it was Barney Biglan."

"Come here, you, sir, I have got to pay you off for old and new," said his father, seizing him and bending him over his knee.

The fond and pious parent at once proceeded to use his broad palm upon the most bulky portion of Tommy's body, and he began with the intention of "warming" the boy as he thought he deserved.

But he had given him only three or four blows before he began to cough and sneeze like mad. The truth was, Tommy had expected his spanking, and had placed a handful of red pepper in the seat of his trousers, so when his father began to belabor him the pepper flew out and set him sneezing fearfully.

And his mother, who seemed delighted at the prospect of Tommy's getting what he deserved, also began to sneeze the worst way. So did the children, including Tommy, and such another sneezing chorus was never heard before.

Mr. Bounce dropped his son, and for the next quarter of an hour was paying particular attention to sneezing.

He and his wife appeared to take turns at—"Ah-te-chew!"

"Wha—wha—ah—te—chew!" said his mother, trying to express herself.

"I—I—ah—te—chew?" responded his father, throwing back his head and acting as though the upper portion of it was coming off.

"Thomas Bounce, you—ah—te—chew!"

"Ah—te—chew!" responded Tommy.

At this point Mr. Bounce made a bolt for the door, sneezing as he went, and anxious to get into the open air.

"Thomas Bounce, I'll—ah—te—chew!" said his mother, and all the children joined in the chorus, drowning the old lady's threatening.

Then they all rushed out of doors, and fresh air was in great demand.

It was fully half an hour before either of the parents could control themselves sufficiently to institute an investigation.

But while they were doing this, Tommy skipped away down on the orchard; pulling off his trousers, he got to the windward and proceeded to beat them against the apple tree until the pepper was all shaken out and no tell-tale remained.

He had barely time to dress himself again and get back to the house, when his father, with tears in his eyes—tears occasioned by the pepper—came in search of him.

Tears weren't the only thing there was in Mr. Bounce's eyes; there was fire in that eye, much fire.

"Thomas Bounce, come here!" said he, savagely.

Thomas approached, as honest as a potato-bug.

"Come here; let me examine you," said he, taking the youth by the slack of his trowsers, and lifting him up.

He smelled of his pants to see if he could detect anything wrong, but all was clear and innocent.

He shook him as a terrier would a rat, and then smelled again.

"What's the matter, dad?" asked Tommy, as his father set him down upon his feet again.

"Matter! Why, you young rascal, I only wish I knew, I'd waltz you around this farm like a runaway mule. What was it made us all sneeze so?"

"How should I know, pop?"

"Hang me if I don't believe you know."

"What is it all about?" asked the boy, innocently. This was a poser.

The old man knew that something was the matter, that something decidedly pungent and ticklish had visited the nostrils of the whole household while he was spanking his eldest born, but what it was, or where it came from was a conundrum which he could not solve.

"Tommy, I think you are a great rascal."

"Me, pop?"

"Yes, you."

"What have I done?"

"Ah, I only wish I knew. But come into the house and attend family worship, and if I ever have a chance to suspect you again, I will whale you within an inch of your life. Come."

Tommy started to follow his father. He was behind him, and in this position thought it safe to indulge in one or two grins of a very broad and comical nature.

His father turned suddenly around and caught him grinning.

"Ah! you young rascal," said he, seizing him by the ear, "what are you grinning at?"

"I—I was a-thinkin', pop, I—I was a-thinkin' how comical I looked when you lifted me by the—trowsers, that's all."

"Oh, that's it, hey? well it's lucky for you that it was all, only let me catch you laughing at anything else, and you will see what you get."

He pulled the poor fellow's ear until it was as long as a donkey's, and it made Tommy very mad.

But he kept his temper the best he could, and followed his father into the house. There his mother and the children were assembled, but every now and then they would give vent to an "ah—te—chew!" that told how well the red pepper had done its work.

"Did you skin him, Josiah?" asked his mother.

"There's a mystery about it, wife."

"Yes, but I'll be bound that he knows all about it."

"Oh, honest Injun, mother," put in Tommy.

"Ah, if I only thought you had been playing one of your tricks on us, how I would!"

"There, there, never mind, it's time for prayer," said Mr. Bounce, taking the family Bible from the shelf.

"Oh, but it's dreadful hard to bear, Josiah, from our oldest boy."

"Well, well, we won't talk about it, now," replied Mr. Bounce.

"I say, mammy, I'm all right; I didn't do nuffin," said Tommy.

"Well, mind you don't."

By this time the children were all seated around in their proper places, and Mr. Bounce read a chapter. Then he knelt down to pray.

Tommy and Jakey knelt near to each other, and as both understood the fun that they had made, they were neither of them in a very pious or sentimental mood while the devotions were going on.

Carlo was also there, so was the family cat. They always made up the family circle, and, if not molested, behaved themselves as well as other members of the little family.

But Tommy and his brother felt full of mischief, too full to hold. Neither of them had their evening flogging yet, and both seemed determined to earn it without any discount.

Carlo was lying near the boys, and the cat was only a few feet away. The old man was just beginning to wax eloquent in his petition. Now was a chance for some "Old Boy" to work in.

Tommy touched Carlo and called his attention to the cat. In an instant the dog was up and ready for anything, but the cat still winked in peaceful quiet.

Then Tommy spat upon his hand and placed it upon the cat. In an instant Carlo made for her, and she made for safe quarters. Around and around the room they went, but at length the cat took refuge on the back of Mr. Bounce as he knelt before his chair.

Jakey acted as though he was about to explode, while Tommy was secretly encouraging Carlo to make fiddle-strings of the cat.

Mr. Bounce kept on with his prayers, and Mrs. Bounce, good soul, although she had an open eye on what her boys were doing, she refused to break the solemn occasion further than to point her finger warningly at them.

Carlo barked and the cat got her back up still higher, and in doing so drew her claws into the back of Mr. Bounce and made him squirm with pain.

But such a state of affairs could not exist long in connection with any degree of piety, and so the old man rose up and shook that irate tabby cat from his back.

She flew out of the window and Carlo followed with a bound, although tabby got out of his way very quickly after she was once outside of the room.

But the boy, oh! where was he?

In about three seconds he was lying belly down, across his father's knees, while that good right hand was rising and falling in a very demonstrative way upon that portion of Tommy's anatomy used for sitting-down purposes.

"Give it to him, Josiah!"

"Owe! owe!" howled Tommy, while Jakey and the others darted out of the room and went up stairs to bed.

"Will you ever, Thomas Bounce?"

"No, never, Papa Bounce?"

"Warm him good, Josiah?"

"Yes, I will, Maria."

And he did.

"Now, sir, you git."

"Yes, sir, you bet."

And being released Tommy left the room, rubbing the seat of his trousers, and soon after joined Jakey and his sisters.

"Oh, won't I get even though!" said he, as he went supperless to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE reader will recollect that we left our hero, Tommy Bounce, going to bed smarting under the administration of a lively palming from his indignant father, and threatening to get severely "even" for it.

It will also be remembered that Tommy had earned this spanking by setting the dog upon the cat during family worship, and the cat taking refuge on his father's back, where she inserted her claws in right good earnest.

But Tommy didn't feel half so revengeful the next morning as he thought he should. In fact, that was generally the way with him. After the smarting was over with, some new ideas of mischief were a great deal more likely to take possession of his heart than thought of revenge for what he had suffered.

And he was very much like his father in that respect. The old gentleman was not apt to remember anything against the children for a great length of time, and one night's sleep would generally obliterate all animosities of the day before.

Not so, however, with the old lady, Tommy's mother. She nursed her resentments longer, and it took a much longer time to make her forget what had once annoyed her.

She, of course, loved Tommy, but at the same time she believed he was the most given to mischief of any boy she had ever seen, and that the only way to root it out of him was to "hide" him every hour or two.

She always called flogging "hiding."

Of course the reader knows by this time that she was not far out of the way in her estimation of Tommy; but she would have felt vastly better could she have only satisfied herself beyond a doubt in many things.

Yet the truth and the trouble was, Tommy was quite as sly as he was mischievous, and his parents could never catch him at his tricks, and nearly always he had to suffer on circumstantial evidence.

Well, Tommy and his brother Jakey were up early the next morning, for their father had learned them to get up with the lark and assist him with his morning chores, or study their lessons.

Mr. Bounce had apparently forgotten all about the last night's troubles, even though his back smarted from the clawing it had received from Tabby. He went about his chores, whistling cheerfully, while the boys each attended to theirs.

But Mrs. Bounce still looked squarely and suspicious.

"Don't you dare grin at me, you little varmint, after last night," said she, shaking her fist at Tommy.

He didn't attempt to argue the case with her. He went and attended to his work, kept his eye open for any stray fun, and got up a good appetite for his breakfast.

A few days afterwards Mr. Bounce hired an old darkey to help him with his crops.

He didn't appear to like either Tommy or Jakey much from the first. But there was evidently no love lost between them. The boys had played one or two of their pranks on him before he had been there a day, and Tommy had received a smart box on the ear in return.

The negro, Moses, had quite as many weaknesses as any of his race, but one of his greatest was a love for hard cider.

One Saturday afternoon, Moses was working in the garden alone, Mr. Bounce having gone to the village on business.

Tommy and his brother had been set at pulling weeds, but of course were doing something else quite as much as the work which had been assigned them.

Moses and the boys had trouble before Mr. Bounce had been gone half an hour.

Tommy was spicing his work by playing with a lath.

Thrusting one end of it into the soil he would flip it high in the air and once or twice it fell quite near to where Moses was at work.

"Better look out dar," said Moses.

"What's the matter, Uncle Mose?" asked Tommy, in all innocence.

"I—I jes' show you wha' de matter is if I catch yer flinging in any moa' mud dis way."

"Oh, it's only a mud shower; I can't help it, Moses."

"Wha' den, I jes' make yer help it. I'm a bad man when my back's up, so look out for me, 'cas' I's got my eye a looking out for you 'uns," said he, as he continued his work.

But Tommy had no notion of being frightened, or of giving up his fun. His ear still smarted from a blow that Moses had given him a short time before, and so every few minutes a spot of soft soil would drop near the darkey.

"Better look out for me," he threatened.

"Wouldn't like to look in for you, old man," said Tommy, sending another spot over to where Moses was hoeing.

The old darkey picked up a stone and threw it at them without effect.

"Break ebery bone in yer skin if yer don't quit yer foolin'—by golly I will."

"Got to catch us first," suggested Jakey.

"Don't yer boddercate me too much, now I go fer ter tell yer I'm bad, yer better beliebe."

"You arn't bad-looking, though."

"Better not boddercate me!"

"Want some cider, Uncle Moses?"

This question suspended his wrath for a moment, but he still shook his head warningly.

Moses was a great coward, and the boys were not long in finding it out. He would undoubtedly handle them roughly, provided he could get hold of them, but they were not much afraid of him so long as their legs served them.

Presently Tommy found some very soft soil, and he flipped a good-sized part of it in the darkey's direction.

The aim was even better than he had expected, for it struck the old fellow in the ear, and filled it full.

Then there was a mad nigger in that little neighborhood, about as mad a one as was ever seen.

Dropping his hoe he began to dance, while Tommy and his brother made for the fence and mounted it, so as to be ready for anything that might follow.

There they sat, laughing like two imps of mischief, while Moses was dancing around like a boy with a grasshopper in his trousers leg, and making use of the most expressive word he knew of.

He knew it would be useless to run after the boys, for they could fly faster than he could follow, and so he was obliged to get all the consolation he could out of swearing and dancing. In fact, he ruined several hills of potatoes in no time by his wild antics.

"Hit me again, will you?" shouted Tommy.

"By gollermighty! only 'ou jes wait."

"All right, I'll wait."

"Dar'll be a nice little funeral ober to your house for long, you bet."

"All right. Will you come to it?"

"You jes bet I will."

"Bully. None 'o the rest of 'em'll have to wear mourning, Moses; you'll be black enough for a double funeral," said Tommy, whereat he and Jakey laughed heartily.

"All right foa you now! all right," said he, picking up his hoe and going to work again, without attempting to pick the mud out of his ear.

The boys kept their perch and laughed for some time, while Moses would shake his head from side to side with slow but ominous movement, as though measuring out in his mind what he would do, provided he got a chance.

"Aren't you going to dig it out of your ear, Moses?" called Tommy, after awhile.

Moses looked up, and regarded his tormentors for awhile without speaking.

"Dig it out, Moses, or it will dry."

"Hoe it out."

"Plant a potato in it."

"Does yer see dat yer?" he asked, at length, pointing to the mud in his ear.

"Yes," they both answered.

"Wall, all right. You see it?"

"Yes."

"Wall, I'se jes gwine ter let dat be dar till yer fadder comes home, an' I'se gwine ter show dat to yer fadder."

The boys exchanged glances, and broke out again into a loud laugh at the ridiculousness of the thing.

"I'se jes gwine for ter ax yer fadder if youse what he calls Christian boys—see if I don't now—and he'll peel de hide all off o' yer; mine wha I'se tellin' on yer."

"Oh, dad will dance us," said Jakey.

"Well, I'm even with him for bustin' me on the ear."

"Let's make up with him," said Jakey.

Tommy was silent a moment.

"I say, Uncle Moses," said he, at length.

The darkey looked up.

"Want some cider?" he asked, good-naturedly.

But Moses was too mad to trust himself with a reply just then, although the thought of getting a drink of hard cider was almost enough to make him grant them forgiveness.

"I say, Uncle Moses, dig it out of your ear an'don't

say anything to dad about it, an' I'll get you a big pitcher full of cider. Will you do it?"

A broad smile gradually began to steal over the old fellow's black face and thaw away the ugliness that had been there.

"What do you say?"

"Will you 'have yourselves afterwards?" he asked, finally.

"Oh, certainly. Is it a go?"

"Big pitcher o' cider?"

"Yes."

"No foolin'?"

"Narry."

"No more skylarkin'?"

"Honest Injun."

"Wall, all right. You go get that cider an' I'll dig out dat ear an' say nuffin' 'bout it ter yer fadder."

Tommy started for the house to fulfill his part of the agreement, and Jakey sat there on the fence to see if the old man kept his word.

But the thought of a big drink of cider had well nigh obliterated all resentment, and he began to clean out his ear.

"Fo' de Lord, but dem's dresful frolicsome boys," said he to himself. "Never seen so much deviltrum in two boys' hide afore. Hab he gone foa dat cider, Jakey?" he asked, calling.

"Yes, that's all right. He'll be back soon."

"Don't 'spose they can help cuttin' up any moa dan a duck can help swimmin'; dat sorter natural ter some uns; 'pears like dey can't help it noa more 'an nuffin'."

Thus the old fellow soliloquized while getting over his anger.

But let us follow Tommy.

As he walked along, the spirit of mischief took possession of him.

The idea of making friends with the old darkey was well enough, but he could not bear the thought of giving him up as a subject for fun.

At the house on the mantelshelf there was an earthen toy, an exact imitation of a bullfrog.

Tommy resolved to get possession of it for the purpose of carrying out a joke which had just entered his head.

His mother happened to be in another part of the house, and he found no difficulty in obtaining the toy.

Placing it in the bottom of the pitcher he went down to the cellar and drew about two quarts of cider, and then, with a broad grin on his face, he started back to where Moses was at work.

Coming to where Jakey was, he asked:

"Has he cleaned off the mud?"

"Yes; he's all right now," replied Jakey.

"Sure he isn't playing possum?"

"No, I guess not."

"Well, Jakey, now you'll see more fun than you ever had in your life."

"What is it?"

"You know that earthen frog?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've got it in the bottom of the pitcher, and you just wait and see how it will scare the old fellow."

Jakey got red in the face with suppressed laughter.

"Hab yer got dat yer cider, Tommy?" called Moses.

"Yes; here it is."

"Wall, fetch it along, foa I am as dry as a last year's bird's nest."

"All right, here you are," said Tommy taking the pitcher to him.

Moses could drink cider almost at any time, whether he was thirsty or not, but just then he happened to be very much in want of a drink, so he speedily placed himself outside of one-half of it.

"Foa de Lord, Tommy, dat yer am the best apple juice dat eber a man swab out his throat wid," said he, after drinking as long as he could hold his breath.

"Like it?"

"Like it! Do a calf like 'teat? Do a kitten like a warm brick? Do a duck like water? Do a hog like mud? Better b'lieve I like it."

"Well, all right. We're good friends now, ain't we?"

"Fus rate, Tommy, fus rate, only don't play no moa deviltrums wid de ole man."

"Oh, honest Injun."

"Den dat am all right. Now see how I can get away wid dese pertaters," said he, setting the pitcher, with the remainder of the cider, down in the shade of a tree.

"Go it, Moses."

"Only watch me. Keep yer eye on dem yer hills See dar?" he asked, as he seized his hoe and began prancing around.

For half-an-hour the old darkey made the dirt and weeds fly lively.

The cider had a good effect upon him, and he worked twice as fast as he did before.

During this time Tommy and Jakey were at work pulling weeds and waiting as patiently as they could until Moses should go for the remainder of the cider, and in the meantime they had got themselves sobered down and in readiness to enjoy the old fellow's surprise.

It was not long before Moses felt dry again and went for the pitcher.

He sat down and poised himself for a long, finishing pull at it.

The boys pretended to be at work, but were watching him carefully.

Presently he reached the bottom and saw what he supposed was a big, live frog.

Dropping the pitcher he started to his feet.

"Wa! wa! wa!" he yelled.

"What's the matter, Moses?" asked Tommy.

"Wa! wa! wa!" he yelled again.

"What's the trouble?"

"Oh! oh! oh! I'se pizened! Snakes, bugs, varmints, toads!" he yelled, at the same time retching as though anxious to turn himself wrong side out.

The boys had all they could do to keep from yelling right out.

"What is it?"

"A big frog! Oh! oh! oh! I'se pizened! I'se pizened, I know I is!"

He ran towards the house, holding on to his stomach and moaning loudly.

At that moment Mr. Bounce came into the lot and saw what was going on.

"What is the matter, Moses?" he asked.

"Oh, Lord, matter 'nough, Massa Bounce; I'se pizened shua," he replied.

"Poisoned! How?"

"Drunk a frog!"

"A what?"

"Oh, I'se got 'em."

"I should say so. Stop! tell me what has happened to you."

"Cider—frog!" was all the reply the frightened darkey could make.

"Come and show me."

"No; I'se a gone coon. Pray for me, Massa Bounce, please do!"

Unable to make head or tail to the affair, Mr. Bounce turned to where Moses had been at work. He was not long in finding the pitcher and discovering the cause of the negro's fright.

In an instant the joke flashed upon him, and he knew well enough who had played it on the poor fellow. He couldn't help laughing to save his life. Taking up the pitcher and the harmless frog, he glanced back to where Tommy and his brother were at work, looking as honest both of them as a pair of doves.

A rod or two beyond lay Moses, or rather he was hanging over the fence, moaning loudly and calling for Mr. Bounce to come and pray for him.

Mrs. Bounce had in the meantime heard the darkey's outcries and had come out to see what had befallen him. He was doing his best to tell her all about the frog which he supposed had got into his cider while he sat in the shade, and was just going into another spasm when Mr. Bounce came up.

"Where is it, Josiah?" she asked anxiously.

"Here it is," said he, laughing and holding up the innocent cause of all the trouble.

"Yes, dat's it," moaned the darkey. "Got inter de cider when it sot dar in de shade, an' I'se drunk de essence ob dat frog—oh, Lord! Send for a doctor, quick!"

Mr. Bounce handed it to his wife, all the while laughing heartily. At first she drew back, but the next instant she recognized her shelf ornament.

"Don't see how you can laugh," moaned Moses.

"Why, it's our china frog."

"Yes, an' dem's de wuss kind I'se hearn," suggested Moses, doubling up again and making a face that would have frightened an owl.

"Why, how came it in the cider pitcher?" asked Mrs. Bounce.

"Hopped in, I s'pose," suggested Moses.

"Hopped your granny. It's nothing but a china frog, you old fool."

"De berry wuss kind."

"Look here. It's only a make-believe frog. What a fool you are making of yourself!"

Mr. Bounce was laughing loudly.

Moses glanced up and gazed inquiringly at the toy as she held it in her hand.

"Wa—wa—wha' dat?"

"An earthenware frog, that's all."

"Who—who—am it turned to stun?"

"It was always stone. You're a fool."

"Yes, more scared than hurt," suggested Mr. Bounce.

Moses looked puzzled.

"Josiah, this is them boys' doings."

Mr. Bounce laughed acquiescence.

"But you don't do right, Josiah Bounce, to laugh. Why don't you go and cut a switch and skin the young varmints?"

"Maria, it's awful comical."

"There! there you go again, Josiah Bounce, 'awful comical.' You're spoilin' them boys every day."

"Ament dat a frog after all?" asked Moses, after gazing at it a few moments.

"No, it's only a toy, you old fool," replied Mrs. Bounce, turning away with it to the house.

"Wal, if dat amn't de wuss I ebber seen in de whole course ob my life."

"You were the worse frightened darkey I ever saw in my life. Now go to your work. It was only a joke that the boys played on you."

"By goshum!" was all he said, as he slowly turned away to his hoeing.

But what he thought was quite another thing.

He knew enough, however, to understand that he was a badly sold darkey.

As for Mr. Bounce, the joke excited his laughter so much that he could not find it in his heart to reprove Tommy for it just then, and so he went off by himself and had his laugh out.

Tommy and Jakey enjoyed the thing of course, but it created an impassible gulf between them and Moses, which nothing could bridge over, while

Mrs. Bounce refused to be comforted until both of them had received a "hiding."

And so we might go on for a long time enumerating the pranks of this "family mischief," for he was always up to something, but it would take a large book to contain them all.

But Tommy did not always get the best of everything.

His jokes sometimes turned upon himself, though not often.

I cannot help relating one which happened a few years ago.

He had grown to be quite a boy, and yet he was as full of his pranks as ever.

He was down to the village with his father and Jakey one day, and while the old gentleman was attending to some business they wandered off to see the sights.

When it came time to go home the boys were nowhere to be found.

Mr. Bounce waited for a long time, but still they did not come.

At length he filled his pipe, and lighting it, strolled leisurely down the street, stopping before the different shop windows to see what was there on exhibition.

He would pull away vigorously at his pipe, and then placing it behind him he would stand stooped over gazing into the store windows, all the while wondering why Tommy did not come.

But Tommy did come. He espied his daddy stooped over looking into the windows with his pipe behind him, and stealing up carefully he took the stem of the pipe in his mouth and stole a whiff or two without attracting his father's attention.

Then the old fellow would put the pipe in his mouth and take a few pulls, Tommy all the while keeping behind him, and stealing a smoke whenever he got a chance, greatly to the delight of Jakey—who was also keeping out of sight—and several villagers who were watching the fun.

Finally the old man stopped in front of a store where there was a molasses cask that had leaked considerably, and while standing with his hands crossed behind him, still holding the pipe as before, and wondering why people would be so careless of the sweets of life, Tommy again stole out from behind a post and took another pull at the old man's pipe.

Then he reached around, and sticking his finger into the molasses, he placed some of it on the stem of the pipe. When his father placed it in his mouth he started suddenly and looked around. Tommy was discovered.

Taking him by his north ear he led him to where the wagon stood in waiting, and promised him a good "hiding" on their arrival home.

But Tommy had got the worst of the joke anyway, for the smoke that he had stolen from his father's pipe had made him sick, and he was glad to lay down in the bottom of the wagon in the straw while returning home, and during the ride he mentally swore that he would play no more tricks with his father's old pipe, however many he might play on its owner.

But the spirit of mischief was not knocked out of him by any manner of means, as we shall see hereafter.

CHAPTER V.

We left our friend Tommy Bounce quite sick over one of his jokes.

He thought it would be splendid fun to steal a few whiffs from his father's pipe, while the old gentleman held it behind him as he gazed into the store window, but it made him sick.

He got over it shortly, however, but kept a good distance from the old pipe when he wished to have a bit of sport.

Do you know what a quilting party is? Well, Tommy's mother had one at her house not long after the incidents spoken of in the last paper, and both he and his brother Jakey made up their minds to have some fun out of it.

About a dozen women who lived in the neighborhood were assembled to take part in the quilting bee, and a great many good things had been cooked for the occasion, for in the country these affairs are looked upon with much interest, and a social good time is had generally.

After capturing all they could eat, they began to study up some mischief; Tommy especially felt that the affair would be a failure, so far as he was concerned, if it not end up in his getting a walloping.

His mother suspected that he would be up to some sort of mischief, and cautioned him over and over again about having himself.

"Now, do you mind what I tell you, Thomas Bounce, and if I catch you at any of your kiddydoes while the company is here,



Tommy stealing a whiff from his daddy's pipe.

ing to attend to he soon forgot them and went down into the field.

But work was soon found for both of the boys, for four or five of the women had brought their babies along with them, and Tommy and Jakey were ordered to attend to them, while their mothers helped do the sewing and afterwards the eating.

This kept them pretty busy, but it allowed them more privileges than they otherwise would have had, for they could roam all over the house while taking care of the babies without being suspected of anything wrong.

This was a little sweet with the bitter, and they resolved to make the most of it.

First they began to examine the bonnets which the visitors had deposited on the bed in the spare-room. They all had different flowers and feathers on them, and what did those two mischiefs do but change the feathers and flowers in the most confusing manner.

Mrs. Brown's hat had Mrs. Jones' feather, and Mrs. Smith's flowers on, and so they went through the entire lot.

Then they took the babies out for a walk, although they didn't care half so much for that as they did for getting away somewhere by themselves where they could enjoy a first-rate laugh over what they had done.

"On, but shan't we catch it, though?" asked Jakey, after they had both laughed themselves nearly sore.

"Yes, I s'pose so. But it's bully good fun, but I don't mind getting waltzed for a good thing," replied Tommy.

"No, but it'll hurt, though."

"Well, what of it. They'd no business to bring their babies along for us to mind."

"That's so. This one is yelling all the while. Hush up, you little pug-nosed Brown," said he, making up a snoot at the kid.

"I say, Jakey, we may as well be hung for an old sheep as a lamb, eh?"

"Yes, of course. Why?"

"I know some more fun."

"What is it?"

"We're sure to get whacked anyway. See?"

"Yes," said Jakey, a trifle sorrowful.

"Well, we may as well earn it."

"I guess we have."

"No. What I mean is, we shall catch it just as hard if we don't do anything more, so we may as well have some more fun and let her rip."

"What is it, Tommy?"

"Well, you have got two babies and so have I. Now, let's take the clothes off and change 'em."

"So they won't know them?"

"Yes, and see what fun there will be."

"By jingoes, I!" exclaimed Jakey, as the idea flashed across his mind.

"Come, let's do it. Here is Mrs. Smith's girl-baby—take the duds off of Mrs. Brown's boy-baby and see how they look."

In a few minutes the exchange was made, and they could hardly tell themselves which was which.

Babies nearly all look alike, and this particular four were of nearly the same age, and did not look very much unlike.

At all events when the other two had exchanged dresses, ornaments, and such things, the boys could hardly tell to save them, which was which, or pick the boy out from the three girls.

After walking around with them for some time they went to sleep, and were all deposited together on the bed.

Then the boys laid low to see which of the mothers would make the discovery first, for they were all in the dining-room eating at this time, it being dusk.

Before they had finished, it was time to light the candles, but they all spoke of what good boys Tommy and Jakey were to take care of babies.

I only wish that I had such a boy," said Mrs. Brown, sipping her fourth cup of tea.

"So do I," put in Mrs. Smith.

"They must be a great help to you, Sister Bounce," said Mrs. Jones.

"Dreadful good boys," suggested Mrs. Jabber.

"Well, yes, they are quite considerable help to me," replied Mrs. Bounce, mildly. The truth was, she knew them much better than her neighbors did, and therefore she was not so extravagant in her praise.

Well, as it began to grow dark, the good people began to make preparations for going home. Some of the husbands had come for them, and in the social reunion thus brought about, nothing wrong was discovered with the sleeping babies.

But when the women folks went to put on their hats there was some excitement, as may well be imagined. Tommy and his brother were out doors listening, in the shadow of a tree which grew near the window.

"Why, Mrs. Brown, you have got my hat on," said Mrs. Jones.

"No, I have not."

"Why, yes you have."

"Here, where is my hat?" asked Mrs. Smith, as

she stood looking at a part of it which she held in her hand.

"My hat has a blue feather," said another.

"I guess I know my own hat."

"Mrs. Jabber, I will trouble you for my hat, if you please," said Mrs. Dunks, sharply.

"Sister Jabber, do you suppose for a moment that I don't know my own hat?"

"Well, do you think me a fool? My hat is the only one in this town that has French flowers on it. French roses."

"And mine is the only white plume."

By this time they all stood with each a hat in their hand looking confused and angry.

Neither could understand what it meant. It was the worst mix and the most incomprehensible one that they ever experienced.

Mrs. Bounce and the husbands came upon the scene, but by this time a dozen tongues were rattling away on high keys, and as they were all getting more and more confused and vexed, all attempts at getting at the cause of the difficulty were hopeless.

Mr. Binx suggested good naturedly that they had partaken too freely of hard cider for supper, and it had got into their heads, but as they were all temperance women they denied the whole thing, and turned savagely upon Binx, who beat a lively retreat out of the house.

They then turned on each other and began calling names, and insinuating all sorts of horrible things, and finally each one who owned a baby snatched it up from the bed where it lay sleeping and bounded out of the house in a huff. Some of them even went so far as to threaten their friends with the law.

But finally they all got out of the way, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Bounce in the greatest quandary they were ever in during the whole course of their lives. What could it possibly mean?

"Josiah, I'm just bewildered," said she.

"So am I, Maria."

"And only to think of the scandal. Why, it will be all over the country in less than a week."

"It beats my time, wife."

"Where are those boys?" she asked, after a moment's silence.

"Why, what could they know about it?"

"Josiah, I don't know; but somehow there is more strange things happening than I know how to account for."

"Oh; they couldn't know anything about this affair, the women must have been somehow confused."

"Maybe, Josiah, but somehow I think them boys are knowing to it."

"Oh, you are too quick to accuse them of everything."

"And you are too quick to excuse them. Here, Thomas Bounce, come here," said she, as our hero came meekly in, followed by Jakey. "What have you been doing this afternoon?"

"Bein' a good boy, mammy."

"Takin' care of the babies," put in Jakey.

"And is that all you have done?"

"Honest Injun," said Tommy, holding up his hand.

"Well, it's well for your skins that you have not been cutting up. Go and eat your suppers."

"Yes'm," they both replied meekly, as they started to go.

"Who ever heard of such a thing? Oh, my! I wouldn't have had it happen for the world."

"Oh, I guess it will all come out right in the morning," suggested Josiah.

"I'm afraid not. Only think how mad they were with each other. And I know there was something wrong about the hats, for I took particular notice of each one, for you know you promised to buy me one the next time we go to the village. I never was so put about."

And so they talked and talked until nearly midnight, but without arriving at any solution to the mysterious mix.

As for Tommy and his brother, they could hardly understand how it was that the thing passed off without their getting an evening walloping. They felt disappointed, knowing how well they had earned one, and finally went to sleep in blissful ignorance of all the mischief they had done.

When Mrs. Brown got home she threw the baby on the bed, and slapping the hat down upon a chair she sat down for a "regular cry."

Poor Brown, he was glad to sneak off to bed after putting up his horse, for she had made it warm for him with her tongue ever since leaving Bounce's house.

There lay Mrs. Jones' hat beyond a doubt, with her feather and Mrs. Nipp's flowers on it.

There was no mistake about it, but how could it have happened?

After crying and puzzling over the matter for some time, she finally wound up with a solemn promise never to go to another quilting party, and to forever cut the acquaintance of all who had been there that day.

Then she took up the baby for the purpose of undressing it.

They were her baby's clothes, and her eyes were too dim with tears to notice very particular, so she undressed it, nursed it for a while, and then began changing its diaper.

Then she discovered that a change of sex had taken place. Her boy-baby had become a girl! Then she screamed:

"Ebenezer! Ebenezer! Ebenezer!" she yelled, and then fainted away.

Brown came running into the room, almost the same as he came into the world.

"What is it, Polly; what has happened?" he asked, going quickly to her.

Then he was frightened. Taking the baby he placed it in the cradle and then began to bring his wife to herself. A little water and a snuff or two of hartshorn did the business, but the moment she opened her eyes she began to scream.

"What is the matter, Polly; are you crazy?"

"Yes, I'm crazy. Everybody is crazy. Where is my baby?"

"Why, here it is, and you are frightening it to death. What do you mean, Polly?"

"That is not our baby."

"Why, Polly, don't be a fool."

"Look there," said she, taking up the babe, "our babe is a boy."

Mr. Brown started back in surprise. Here was a greater mystery than the hat business was.

"Well, Polly, you have taken somebody else's baby, that's all," said he, endeavoring to pacify his wife.

"But these are our baby's clothes. What does it all mean?"

The conundrum was too much for Brown, and he gave it up.

"Oh, I know I shall go crazy. Why did I ever go to that horrid quilting?"

"Gracious!" sighed Brown, "whose baby do you think it is?"

"It must be Mrs. Smith's."

"Are you sure these are our clothes?" he asked, taking them up.

"Am I sure of anything, Ebenezer Brown?"

"Well, Polly, it don't look as though you was to-night. But I think it will be all right in the morning."

"Oh, but how can I sleep to-night without my own little darling--without my boy-baby?"

Brown didn't appear to have anything to say to this question either, but stood looking like a bewildered donkey.

"Ebenezer, you must harness up the horse and ride over to Mrs. Smith's with me," said she, commencing to re-dress the baby, who by this time was beginning to protest against all the nonsense it had undergone, and was yelling lustily.

Brown knew that there would be no peace unless he did as requested, and so he dressed himself and harnessed the old mare.

On arriving at Smith's they found another up-stair, occasioned by discovering that they had also

taken the wrong baby, but after comparing notes both mothers were made happy by the exchange which they were able to make.

But how it all happened they could not understand.

Then Brown and his wife set out for home. But on the way, late as it was, they met Mr. and Mrs. Jones in great distress.

They had also got somebody's else darling, and were trying to find their own.

In a short time after they met Mr. and Mrs. Jaber on the same errand.

In fact, it was nearly morning before all hands got their own babies back and got settled. By that time the whole affair had generally become understood as a joke that had been played on them by those awful Bounce boys, the very ones whom they had spoken of in such high terms to Mrs. Bounce.

And each one of those mothers promised to give those young hopefuls of Mrs. Bounce the liveliest hiding that had ever made them caper, and after they got through they were to be handed to the fathers, and then to Mr. and Mrs. Bounce to put on the finishing touches.

The joke soon leaked out, and became the talk of the town, and though the bothered mothers failed to get a whack at Tommy and his brother, they did not escape quite so fortunately at home.

Mr. and Mrs. Bounce came very near getting into a row themselves over the matter, just because he said he could hardly find it in his heart to flog the boys, on account of its being the best joke he had ever heard of.

But they caught it at last, for old and new.

The joke, however, made them even more notorious than ever in town, and if anybody wished a bad comparison for a person, he would say: "Bad as Tommy Bounce."

Not long after this their aunt, Mrs. Bounce's sister, came to live with them for a while.

She was an old maid, and from the first she and the boys could not agree.

She told their mother that they were the worst boys she had ever known, and, as a natural consequence, they got several "skinnings" on her account.

She had a beau who lived in town, and who came down to see her every Saturday night, and remained over Sunday.

His name was Pulpy, and he also took a dislike to Tommy, and had boxed his ears once or twice.

About a half a mile from the house there was a quiet little lake, and during the hot weather Pulpy frequently went there for a swim.

One Sunday morning he went to the lake for the purpose of sweetening it to go to church with Tommy's aunt.

But Tommy had a debt to pay to Pulpy, and he watched his opportunity for doing so.

So he followed him down to the lake, and after he had taken off his clothes and dived into the water, Tommy showed himself.

"Hello, Pulpy."

Pulpy looked up, but made no reply.

"You're a fraud."

"You clear out or I'll break your head," he said at length.

"Oh, I'll go," said Tommy, taking up Pulpy's clothes and marching away.

"Hi! here! ho! bring back them clothes."

"Come and get 'em."

"I'll come and get you, if you don't drop 'em."

"Good-bye, old man. You'll find your clothes up to the house."

"Bring them back, I say!" yelled Pulpy.

"I'll tell Aunt Sarah to bring them down to you day-day." Saying which he started off, laughing.

"Thunder and blazes," yelled Pulpy, but Tommy kept right on.

Then he came out of the water and started to overtake him, but just at that moment a couple of young ladies came along the road, and Pulpy had to dive for cover.

By the time it was safe for him to go out and again pursue his tormentor, the lad was fifty rods away.

Pulpy shouted, and Tommy waved his shirt to him pleasantly.

Poor Pulpy, he was dodging here, there and everywhere, behind stone walls, bushes, or whatever else he could find that would conceal him from any chance passenger.

How he cursed and swore, but all for nothing.

"Mr. Pulpy wants to see you, Aunt Sarah," said Tommy as he came in from the barn where he had left the clothes.

"Want to see me, does he?" she asked, prinkin up and smiling sweetly. "Where is he, Tommy?"

"Down by the lake."

"Oh, he probably wants me to join him for a ramble."

"Yes, I guess he does, aunty."

"All right, I'll go right away," said she, putting on her garden hat and leaving the house.

In the meantime poor Pulpy was working his way along towards the house, keeping well out of sight and in the hope of getting near enough to make some one hear. But, oh, how he would warm that boy, Tommy.

While creeping along in this way, Carlo, Tommy's dog, discovered him. He went for poor Pulpy savagely, evidently not knowing what sort of an animal he was, but ready for a wrestle with him any how.

Pulpy was scared and ran right out into the path just as Aunt Sarah came along. Then she screamed

and ran back towards the house, followed by Pulpy at a wild gait, with Carlo at his shins.

What to do to escape the confounded dog was the problem just then with Pulpy. The faster he ran the easier it seemed to be for Carlo to keep up with him.

But he kept right on without any regard to the thinness of his costume, and at length he reached the barn door and shut himself in and was safe.

Here he found his clothes where Tommy had left them, and as soon as his trembling limbs would sustain him he got into them.

As for Aunt Sarah, she retired to the privacy of her chamber, drew down the blinds, and refused to look out again during the next two hours.

But when Mr. Pulpy came out in quest of his youthful tormentor, he learned that he and Jakey had gone to Sunday-school, and Carlo, now recognizing him, greeted him with a wagging tail, just as though he had never snapped at his naked shins in the world.

Mr. Bounce was duly informed of the trick, and promised to warm the boy's jacket for him, and this was all the immediate satisfaction poor Pulpy could get.

But when he found that his naked figure had frightened Aunt Sarah into seclusion, he quietly left town and has not been to see her since then, which of course does not make her love Tommy Bounce any more.

CHAPTER VI.

THOSE who have read the preceding chapters will remember the pranks that Tommy Bounce and his brother Jakey cut with the women, who came to his mother's house to make a quilting party, and also how he "got even" with his aunt's beau.

Well, that was not the last of Tommy's pranks by any means, as we shall see before this chapter is finished.

He has grown quite considerably since we first met him, and although a good boy, as boys go, yet he was everywhere regarded as the very impersonation of mischief, and nearly everybody's hand was raised against him on account of it.

But to save his life he couldn't help it, any more than a bird can help singing or a kitten from being playful.

It was in him and must come out, even if he was the one to suffer on account of it, as he almost always was sure to do.

At school neither of them made much progress, for how could they where their skins held so much mischief?

Their parents had almost given up the idea of breaking Tommy of his pranks, for whether guilty or not he received all the blame for whatever might be done, he being eldest.

Mrs. Bounce had always preached in favor of "skinnings" for him, but at length she was forced to admit that such modes of punishment did but little good, and that her first born must be "possessed," and yet she believed in "giving it to him" whenever an opportunity presented itself, although Mr. Bounce, if left to himself, would have adopted another course.

The old schoolmaster also agreed with Mrs. Bounce, that the only way to break him of his mischief and pranks was to wallop him severely whenever caught, or even suspected.

So it will be seen that Tommy still stood a good chance of having his hide tanned before he became a sober man.

But old Larrup, the schoolmaster, was his worst enemy, and Tommy often got flogged for what he did not do. So he resolved to be sure and fully earn what he did get at all events.

Mr. Larrup had a loving tooth for fruit, and whenever he found any of the scholars eating it in school he made it a point to take it away, place it in his desk, and eat it himself for his lunch.

He had played this on Tommy more frequently than upon any other of the boys, partly because he had a standing grudge against him, and partly because he always brought choice Baldwin apples to school with him, and Tommy began to get tired of that sort of a thing.

So one day he procured rather an ancient egg and a very large, fine-looking apple.

With his knife and a teaspoon he cut a place in the apple, and scooped it out in such a way as to make the egg fit in nicely.

Then he took some small pins and fastened the piece he had cut off so skilfully that the eye could not detect the trick, and then he was ready for fun.

Placing it carefully in his pocket he took another one along with him, and started for school with an innocent smile on his mug, that did not look in the least suspicious.

So after school was opened he took out the good apple, and holding his book up before his face, he began to eat, all the time acting as if he did not wish to be caught at it.

But old Larrup had his eye on him all the while, and after a moment he stood up at his desk, and rapping upon it with his ferrule he attracted all eyes.

Tommy dropped his book and hiding the apple, began to study his lesson like a good fellow.

"Thomas Bounce, come out here!" he said, sharply.

Tommy obeyed meekly.

"What were you doing behind your book, boy?"

"Studying my reading-lesson, sir."

"You lie, sir. You were eating. Now, sir, what were you eating?"

"An—an apple, sir."

"Oh! you was, eh! Now, sir, how often have I told you not to eat in school?"

"I—I was hungry, sir."

"Hungry? Hungry for a flogging, I guess! Now, sir, have you any more apples other than the one you was eating?"

"Yes, sir."

"Give them to me."

"I've only got one more."

"Never mind. Give it to me, sir!"

"It isn't a good one, sir."

"Give it to me. Good or bad, you will never see it again. Quick, sir!" he added, as Tommy artfully played reluctance at giving it up.

Tommy took the doctored apple from his pocket, and carefully placed it upon the master's desk.

The old fellow's eyes fairly glistened as he beheld the beautiful, red-cheeked prize.

"Now, then, sir! go to your seat, and if I catch you eating in school again, I will peel the hide off of you! Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, see that you remember."

Tommy returned to his seat, and the exercises of the school continued.

He kept a straight face during the remainder of the forenoon, and was apparently a better boy than he had been known to be for a long time.

Noon came and the school was dismissed.

The children sought their well-filled dinner baskets and scattered themselves around in the coolest places to enjoy their repast, while the master took his while seated behind his desk.

"Now, fellers, you'll see some fun," said Tommy, after they were all out of doors.

"What is it?" asked several.

"Never mind. Lay low and keep your eyes and ears open."

But to a chosen few he told the secret, and in delightful expectancy they lingered around the schoolhouse door to see what came of it.

They did not have to wait long.

Larrup ate his frugal lunch, and then took up the delicious-looking apple that he had taken from Tommy, and eyed it with pleasure.

"By jingoes! but Bounce raises the nicest apples of any man in this town, and I almost wish Tommy would give me an excuse for getting one of them every day," said he to himself, while the boys were listening just outside.

He rubbed it lightly on his coat-sleeve, and then opening his huge mouth, he bit straight through it, taking about half of it in.

The next instant he threw it away, spit out his mouthful, and began to dance and howl around that school-room like a wild Indian in a war-dance.

And he howled and cursed and spat, and held his nose (for that egg was very "loud"), and pulled his hair and called for water, and for a cowhide, a shotgun; anything wherewith to get vengeance and that awful taste out of his mouth.

The boys ran away down to the meadow, behind a clump of bushes, and there they rolled on the green sward and laughed like mad.

One of the larger girls happened to be in the entry at the time, and hearing the master call for water she ran with a dipper full. But his wild antics frightened her so that she dropped it, and ran out among the other scholars and told them that the master had got the hydrophobia.

So Larrup was obliged to get his own water and rinse the taste out of his mouth. But it did not rinse the anger out of his heart by a long shot and he sent in hot haste for Tommy Bounce.

But the lad wasn't to be found. He had gone home to escape the storm.

Full well he knew, however, that it must come sooner or later, and still determined to earn all he got, he stole into a pantry and got a handful of red pepper.

This he wrapped in a piece of paper and placed it in his trousers, in the locality where Larrup always visited him his ferrule when he was particularly angry, as he knew he must be on this occasion.

Thus fixed, he started for school, and got there just as it opened for afternoon exercises.

Larrup's brow was as black as an ink bottle, and Tommy knew what was coming quite as well as the other scholars did, who by this time had become acquainted with the particulars.

"Thomas Bounce, come out here!" almost shrieked the master.

Tommy obeyed without a murmur.

"You gave me an apple, sir," said Larrup, taking his heavy ferrule from the desk and coming out into the floor to meet him.

"No, sir, you took it away from me," said Tommy, frankly.

"It was a bad one!"

"I told you it was."

"Yes, and you prepared it for me, sir."

"No, I fixed it for Jimmy Dinks."

"I'll fix this for you, you young rascal," said Larrup, seizing Tommy by the collar of his jacket and whipping him over upon a stool, face downwards.

"I'll learn you how to play tricks upon people."

Grasping the ferrule firmly he began to belabor Tommy upon that portion of the body most useful for sitting down purposes.

The first blow broke open the paper of red pep-

per, and the second one sent it flying about in clouds. The old fellow gasped and sneezed, and before he had given him a dozen blows, was obliged to stop in order to catch his breath.

By this time the little schoolroom was full of the flying pepper, and such a coughing and sneezing was never heard before. In fact, the school was broken up, and you could have heard the chorus of sneezing for a mile.

Larrup was completely puzzled; what it all meant he could not for the life of him tell, but as his nose and lungs were filled with it, he didn't have much time to speculate on the subject from coughing and sneezing.

He dropped Tommy like a hot potato, and seizing his hat started for the door, managing between his sneezing as he did so, to tell the scholars that school was dismissed for the day.

Without loss of time he started for the doctor's, about a half mile away, sneezing at almost every step, and attracting everybody's attention by his unaccountable actions.

Meanwhile the scholars had their sneeze out joyfully, and started for home to tell the news and enjoy their half holiday.

Tommy lost no time in removing all traces of the red pepper from his clothing, after which he returned home and reported that Mr. Larrup was sick and had gone for the doctor.

The story got out, and poor old Larrup was laughed out of town, and another teacher engaged for the school, who was more popular than he had been from the start.

But Tommy was not deceived about the "hiding" he had earned, for both his father and mother took turns at the job, until all parties were satisfied.

As for Tommy, he was more than satisfied, although the fun that he had had out of the affair went a long ways towards healing his wounds.

Not long after this he and Jakey had a trick played on them. The reader will remember the old darkey, Moses, who worked for Mr. Bounce. Well, Moses played a trick on them.

The boys had arranged a swing under a large oak tree which stood by the edge of a pond, not far from the house—in fact, it was a creek of the same lake in which the chap used to bathe when he became to court their aunt, the one from whom Tommy stole the clothes.

The boys used to have oceans of fun with this swing, standing up in it, face to face, and swinging away up into the branches and out over the muddy creek.

Well, Moses used to watch them, and all the while remembering what games and pranks they had cut with him, he resolved to get even with them in connection with this swing.

So he climbed up the tree one day while they were at school, and cut the rope almost off, leaving just enough to hold any of the other children, but not enough to support Tommy and Jakey when they were swinging together.

That very afternoon Mr. Bounce gave the boys some work to do, and started for the village. But he was scarcely out of sight when they forsook their task and started for the swing.

Moses was working in the same field, and watched them with much interest and grins.

"By golly! dey'll catch it dis yer time, shuah!" he chuckled to himself, as he saw them start for the swing. "Guess dey'll find I'se a bad man for to fool wid."

The boys lost no time in mounting the swing and in getting under way.

"I say, Tommy, wouldn't it be fun if we could only get Moses in here?" said Jakey.

"I'll bet you! Swing him out over the water and spill him out!" and they both laughed as they fancied the consequences.

Higher and higher they went; higher and higher they were trying to go, when, all of a sudden, the rope parted where it had been cut, and both boys went kersouse into the mud and water nearly up to their necks, while old Moses yelled and rolled on the ground in delight.

The boys scrambled out and dragged themselves up upon dry land; but they were about the worse specimens of boys that were ever seen.

The mud was black and clung to them like tar.

"Ya! ya! ya!" roared Moses. "Fo' de Lor' dat de puttest spill dat I ebber seen in de whole course ob my born'd existence. Guess dey won't fool wid de ole man any moah!"

But the old darkey was giving himself away badly.

The boys overheard his shouts of laughter, and saw his manifestations of delight.

"I'll bet a farm against a fine-toothed comb that Moses played that trick on us!" said Tommy.

"I wouldn't wonder," replied Jakey, as soon as he could scrape the mud from his face.

"Hold on a bit; I'll soon see!" and grasping the other end of the rope he drew it from the water and examined the broken spot. "I thought so; look at that!" he said, holding it up.

"Cut, as sure as rats!"

"Yes, sir, and Moses done it, I'll bet. But don't say a word. Let's get cleaned off, and then we'll attend to him."

This was no easy thing to do. They were completely soaked, besides being besmeared with mud, and the only thing to do was to take off everything they had, and rinse them off in the water.

Then they were obliged to hang them on the bushes to dry, while they sported around in the first fashion, and waited until nearly night before they were able to get into them again.

Then they said nothing, but returned to their work as if everything was all right, and always had been.

But Moses found it impossible to relax his face from the broad grin that had taken possession of it.

"Wal, boys, how'd you like yer swim?" he asked, when he came near where they were at work.

"Oh, we had capital fun, Moses!" replied Tommy, good-naturedly.

"Ya! ya! ya! Good fun! Good fun swimmin' in de mud up ter yer necks. By golly! dat yer war de puttest spill dat I ebber seen in my life," and again he threw back his head, opened it from ear to ear, and let out a laugh that would have astonished a horse.

"Did you see us, Moses?"

"Did I? Seed you go ker-chunk!"

"Where was you?"

"Why, I was a hoein' corn."

"Where were we?" he asked, looking serious.

"Fust in de air an' den in de creek," said Moses, laughing again.

"And you saw us?"

"To be shuah. Didn't I jes tolle you so?"

"Where were you, Moses?" again asked Tommy, getting him on a string.

"Why, didn't I tolle you I war heah hoein' corn!"

"Where was Jakey?"

"He war wid you."

"Well, where were we both?"

"Both togedder."

"And you saw us, did you?"

"Go way dar wid yer nonsense," said Moses, who began to drop to Tommy's little racket.

"Where was you?"

"Squit yer foolin'. Better go do dat work yer fadder set yer to or he'll warm dem close dat yer hab on," replied the old dark, resuming his work.

"And so you saw us, did you, Moses?"

"Pity yer hadn't got stuck in dat yer mud an' couldn't git out!" growled he. "But I warn yer agin foolin' wid me," he added, savagely.

"Oh, that's all right, Mosey, I was only trying to find out if you saw us."

"Got too much nonsense all de time."

"I say, Moses, would you have thought that rope would have broken?" asked Jakey.

"Don't know nuffin' 'bout it noways," he replied, gruffly.

"Oh, well, that's all right," and so the subject was dropped for the time being, and the boys returned to their work, leaving Moses to do the same.

But the thought of how he had paid them off for what they had done to him, kept the old fellow on a broad grin during the rest of that day, and he even laughed himself to sleep at night, perfectly satisfied.

But there was a cloud coming up for his benefit. Tommy never allowed a debt that he owed to remain long unpaid, and so he set to work without loss of time to concoct something to cancel the obligations.

While returning from school the next day Tommy discovered a large wasp's nest.

Did you ever see a wasp's nest? This was about the shape and size of a foot-ball.

It was quite a distance from where he lived, but he resolved to capture it, inhabitants and all.

To do so with safety he was obliged to go at night when the wasps were asleep, and at the same time securely close up the little hole which they used for a door to their house.

How to do this bothered him for some time, but he finally happened to think of a plaster that his father had for a lame back, a sticking-plaster, and concluded that it would be just the thing.

So he secured the plaster, and he and Jakey stole out of the house one night and went for the nest; it was hanging to the limb of a bush; and, by holding the plaster in his hand for a moment, it got warm and became very sticky.

This done, he placed it carefully over the hole so as to prevent the wasps from escaping, and in an instant it stuck so fast that they could have escaped through any portion of the globe house just as easily as from the door. After which he broke off the twig to which it hung, and they trudged back home again.

But no one save Jakey knew anything about it, for it was put out of sight you may well believe, and both boys slept as soundly as possible that night, as did also their intended victim, old Moses.

Out near the barn in a shady place Moses had a quiet nook where he used to sleep for half or three quarters of an hour every noon after dinner. He had an old horse blanket spread down and some straw for a pillow.

The next day, being Saturday, school would not keep, and Tommy resolved to fix things for that day. So in the morning, after Moses and Bounce had gone into the field to work, Tommy got the wasps' nest and placed it under the straw which the old darkey used as a pillow.

Then they went honestly to work pulling some weeds in the garden, and doing other things which their mother wished done, all the while behaving suspiciously well and waiting anxiously for noon to come.

But it came at length. Mrs. Bounce blew the dinner horn and Moses lost no time in hiding the substantial dinner which she had prepared for him.

Then, as usual, he went out by the barn to have a snooze. Tommy and Jakey stole out after him and kept just far enough out of the way so that he should not see them.

"I wonder if he remembers that ducking he gave us yet?" asked Jakey.

"He'll probably think of it before he gets through with his nap," replied Tommy.

Moses threw himself upon his old blanket, bounded his head down upon the bunch of straw, and in exactly one minute began to snore like a jerkysafe valve.

But in laying down he had burst the wasps' nest, freeing the imprisoned and enraged insects, who at once began to swarm out to inquire into matters.

Moses was the only person they saw, and without a moment's loss of time they began to ask him what such conduct meant. They didn't ask him with their mouths either.

The next moment an old darkey might have been seen getting up out of that in the liveliest manner imaginable.

"Murder! fire! fire!" he yelled, as he danced and pawed around.

The wasps were giving it to him on all sides and ends, and the way he did caper and bounce around that neighborhood for the next ten minutes was a caution to green grass and vegetables.

The moment the fun begun Tommy and Jakey scuttled for cover.

"Fire! fire! fire!" was all he could yell, and he ran towards the house like mad.

Mr. Bounce and his wife rushed out expecting to find the house or the barn on fire.

"What's the matter, Moses?"

"Bumblebees got inter me! Oh Lord! Drive 'em off!" he yelled.

As the wasps still followed him up, Mr. Bounce broke off a branch of a tree and drove them away, although in doing so he got tickled with the business end of one of them himself, and was tempted to join Moses in yelling fire.

"Fo, de Lord, I never seed anyfing like it. Dey've stung me all ober. Golly for mighty!" howled Moses.

"Where did you get them?" asked Mrs. Bounce.

"Out dar behind de barn whar I go for ter sleep allus arter dinner. Good golly, what teef dey hab got."

Mrs. Bounce gave him some arnica with which to stop the pain, but in less than ten minutes that darkey was the homeliest piece of animated smoked meat that was ever seen.

They had stung him in several places on his face, and as swelling at once set in, his mouth was soon forced around almost under his ear: one of his eyes shut up shop, and his nose assumed the shape and size of a big yellow turnip, while his ears resembled huge toadstools.

"Josiah," said Mrs. Bounce, "where are those boys?"

"Out in the garden at work, I suppose," said lie, going to the window to look out. "Yes, there they are. Why?"

"Josiah, I firmly believe they know something about this rascality," said she. "They haven't had a hidin' to-day, and you had better give them one right away."

Moses attempted to express himself so also, believing that they had put the job up on him, but his mouth was so much swollen that he could not speak, and only made a still more comical show of himself, by attempting to do so.

Mr. Bounce was thoughtful for a moment, but as his sting was quite painful he felt like making some sharp inquiries.

So he took a hickory twig and went out into the garden where our heroes were at work, as honest-looking as two lambs.

CHAPTER VII.

TOMMY BOUNCE and Jakey, his brother, got finely dusted with that hickory twig in the hands of their father, who, it will be remembered, got one kiss from the wasps he was trying to drive away from the old negro, Moses.

They both pretended ignorance, but as their father was smarting from the cause of their prank, he felt just like making them smart in return.

My readers will of course remember how Tommy got even with old Moses for cutting the rope of the swing and sending him and Jakey into the creek, and this was the result of it. But the joke was so good that the flogging they each received failed to make either of them sorry a cent's worth.

And if they had received twice as much as they did, they couldn't have helped laughing at the sight of Moses and his comical swollen mug. It was a sight to behold, and he looked like almost anything else but a human being for the next twenty-four hours.

As for Moses, he was not sure that the boys had played the trick on him with the wasps, and he kept religiously away from the place where he had met his mishap, fearful lest some of the sharp little fellows might be still lingering around to ask him some more questions about why he sat down on their nest.

But one day after he had got well, Tommy asked him some question or other about hornets, which set the old man to thinking.

"Wha—wha' yer know 'bout hornets, anyway?" he asked, thinking to draw him out, and see if he had really been guilty.

"What do I know about hornets, Moses?" he asked, innocently.

"Yas, wha' yer know 'bout 'em?"

"Why, Moses, hornets are awful. Do you know

our swing down by the creek? Well, they gnawed one of the ropes in two, and let Jakey and I into the water."

Moses was caught in his own trap, and asked no more questions, although he felt convinced in his own mind that Tommy had put up the job on him.

But, with the smarting of the stings, the whole thing was forgotten, and they became very good friends again.

Time sped along until autumn without anything special happening, beyond the usual line of mischief which Tommy played upon his brother or sisters, and finally the first holiday of the cold weather series approached, Thanksgiving.

This, among country people, is made quite as much of as Christmas and New Years is with people living in town, and both Tommy and Jakey were looking forward to it with high hopes.

And so was Moses, for with it came the winding up of summer's work. He received his pay, and went home to live a few months with his wife and little family. Nor was that all. Mr. Bounce generally loaded him up with as much provisions as a horse could draw, and sent him away rejoicing.

Well, as Thanksgiving approached, every one was busy with preparations and while they were going on, quite a crowd of company arrived, in the persons of Mr. and Mrs. Jump, the uncle and aunt of Mrs. Bounce, and Mr. and Mrs. Eli Bounce, the uncle and aunt of Mr. Bounce.

They were all funny specimens of green country people, and the children made up their mind for fun with them before Thanksgiving had come and gone. Their comical appearance even made old Moses laugh, although they were respectable people enough.

"By golly! I—I jis' know dat dem yar boys'll hab fun 'nough out ob dat party; I sees it a-stickin' out ob 'em now," mused Moses, as he stood watching Tommy and Jakey.

This might have been true for him, but he was still destined to learn that they had not forgotten him entirely as a victim.

The day before Thanksgiving Mr. Bounce and Moses killed a couple of fat turkeys and a half a dozen chickens for a pot-pie. Then Mr. Bounce told him to select a turkey for himself, and kill it, to take home with him.

The old man laughed like a tickled mule as he started to capture a young gobbler—the very one, by the way, that tried to eat his ear off one day while he lay taking his noon nap.

"By golly, Mr. Gobble, you won't try for ter pick any odder nigger's ear off," said he, as he proceeded to wring the bird's neck.

"Oh, look at dat!" he exclaimed, as he was stripping off the feathers. "How am dat for ft? Guess-Dinah won't open her eye for nuffin' what she sees me promenadin' home to-morrow wid dat yer beauty slingin' ober my shoulder."

So he went on preparing his turkey, and after it was nicely picked, he placed it on the head of a barrel in the barn while he finished up the work he had to do before he went home. The old darkey was so happy that he sang snatches of all the songs and tunes he ever knew, and now and then, when he thought he was out of sight, he would dance a breakdown.

A few moments after he had placed his bird on the barrel, Tommy and his brother took it away and carried it into the kitchen, where they placed it alongside of the other two that had been picked and dressed for to-morrow's dinner. Then they caught a live turkey, tied its feet, just as Moses had tied his dead bird, and placed it where the old fellow had left his gift.

This done, they climb up on the hay mow to see what would be done with it.

Presently Moses came into the barn. He was as tickled as a child, and couldn't keep away from his turkey very long, and so had to go and visit it and smack his chops at it. The boys heard him talking to himself as he entered the barn door.

"Oh, golly! won't Dinah stick her eye out when she sees dat bird? I guess yes."

Just then he caught sight of the live turkey which they had placed where his dead and picked one was, and he started back in astonishment. He stood a moment utterly confused. Then he scratched his head and looked around for some explanation of the mystery.

"Crows an' woodpeckers!" as he came nearer and took a better look; "now if I didn't dun gone an' fink dat I kill an' shaved dat turkey, I's as white as chalk. Mus' be dat I pick and kill Mr. Bounce's and forgot my own. Wal, I'll fix him now, suah," saying which he proceeded to kill and pick the turkey.

The boys watched him from their concealment, and nearly exploded with laughter all the while.

Then Moses sang a little song, something like this:

"Gobbler sat on a hickory limb,
Go 'long,
Gobbler fell and broke his shin,
Go 'long, John.
I catch gobble and cut his froat,
Go 'long,
Den I help him off wid his coat,
Go 'long, John, go 'long."

In about ten or fifteen minutes he had the turkey picked and once more he deposited it upon the barrel.

"Guess dar aren't any mistake 'bout dat yer gobble dis time," said he; "now I'll go an' get a big drink ob dat cider. Gettin' putty nigh time for to go home, an' I mus' do lots more chores yet," he added, leaving the barn.

But no sooner had he got well out of sight and hearing than down came the boys, and catching another turkey they tied its legs as before, placed it where the dead turkey had laid, after which they watched their chances for stealing into the house with the dressed one.

They placed beside the other, that making four turkeys killed and dressed, but they threw a cloth over the first two, and placed the two last ones on top in such a way as to attract no notice.

Then they went back to the barn to secrete themselves in the hay mow to wait for the reappearance of Moses.

Presently they heard him coming along in his old shuffling way, singing all the while:

"Gobbler sat on a hickory limb,
Go 'long,
Gobbler fell an' broke his shin,
Go"

Here he stopped and started back in amazement, for his eyes rested on the live turkey.

"Great snakes an' brumstun! De debil am in dat yer gobbler, suah," saying which he turned and ran for the house as hard as he could go.

In a few moments he returned, accompanied by Mr. Bounce.

"I tell yer dat am a fac, Massa Bounce. Look dar; do yer see dat gobbler?" said he, pointing to it, while his eyes stuck out of his head like door knobs.

"Yes, I see it," said Mr. Bounce, going into the barn to examine the marvel.

"Hol on dar, Massa Bounce! Don't go nigh it; de debil am in it, suah!" he exclaimed.

"Nonsense. What is the matter with you? Have you been drinking any of that cider?"

Moses was forced to admit that he had.

"That accounts for it. You imagined that you killed the turkey, that's all."

Moses scratched his woolly head, while Mr. Bounce turned away laughing and went back to the house.

The boys had taken pains to conceal the feathers, so there was no trace of slaughter or plucking.

Moses stood for some time as though sadly in doubt about everything.

He turned to the spot where he had plucked the bird a few moments before, as he thought, but there was no trace of it.

"Golly for mighty!" he exclaimed, at length.

"Who would have thought dat a little apple juice would make such a fool ob a nigger? Guess I mus' be mighty drunk. Now look at dat gobbler. I could ha just took my oaf dat I broke his neck an' pick his feeders off two times, an' 'stead ob dat it was only de cider workin'. Yal ya! ya! Wha' would Dinah say to dat? Nebber had 'em so bad afore, nebber. Wal, dis time I make suah ob it," he added, banging his woolly head with his fist to bring his senses to work.

Then he seized the pinioned turkey and proceeded to slay and pick it; and while he was in the act of doing so Mr. Bounce returned to the barn for something.

"Guess I'se got him dis time, massa."

"I guess you have, Moses."

"Mus' be mighty strong cider, massa."

"Ah, but you must not drink so much of it. Have you finished?"

"Yes, all done now."

"Well, then, lay it down and come into the woodshed with me, I want you."

"All right, sah," said he, placing the turkey on the barrel.

As he was going from the barn he turned and again called Mr. Bounce's attention to the fact of its being there.

This being witnessed and agreed to they went away."

"Now what shall we do?" asked Jakey, as soon as they had finished the laugh which they had indulged in heartily ever since Moses and their father left. "Catch another turkey?"

"No, no, that's played. Gracious, he has already killed nearly all the turkeys we've got."

"Oh, but shan't we get a hiding for this when it's found out?" suggested Jakey.

"You keep mum. If you don't give it away we won't get found out. Now I'll tell you what we'll do. You know the little pig that dad killed this morning to roast to-morrow?"

"Yes, it's hanging up in the milk-house."

"Yes. Now Moses don't know anything about it, I guess. He was hauling wood when pop killed it. You steal up and get that pig and bring it down here. I'll pipe 'em off so they won't drop on you. Act cool, and when you get a chance, slip it under your coat and mosey back here to the barn."

"All right," said Jakey, starting to go.

The plan succeeded to a charm, and after Tommy had joined his brother they removed the turkey and put the pig in its place, after which they again seceded themselves to watch the result.

Presently they heard Moses singing on his way to the barn, for he was very happy at the prospect before him.

"Gobbler sat on a hickory limb,
Go 'long,
Up wid my gun an' shot him, bim!
Go 'long."



The next moment an old darkey might have been seen getting up out of that in the liveliest manner imaginable.

Carried him home to Mrs. Jones,
Go 'long,
Picked his sedders, den his bones,
Go 'long, John, go 'long."

Once more he approached to take a look at his beautiful turkey, on which he and Dinah were to feast Thanksgiving Day.

Seeing the pig, he started back in dismay.

He glanced around to see if he was not mistaken, but no, there he had left the turkey.

"Gosh for mighty!" he exclaimed. "Dar am witchcraft heah shuah. Massa Bounce, Massa Bounce! Come down heah right away!" he yelled, going to the door. "Nobody gwine for ter make me b'lieve dat a pint ob hard cider can turn a turkey inter a pig, noways. Come, quick."

"What is the matter now, Moses; has your turkey come to life again?"

"Wusser 'an dat, massa; but I don't wants ter trust my own eyes. Look a dah," he added, pointing to the little dead grunter.

Mr. Bounce gazed at the spectacle for a moment, and then comprehending the joke he began to laugh loudly.

"By golly, I—I—I don't come stand it."

"Why, that is the pig I killed this morning, and the boys have been playing a joke on you, that is all, Moses."

Moses thought a moment, and then he joined in the laugh.

"Bes' joke I ever knowed, by golly."

"Very good indeed, very good."

"Tryin' for to make me b'lieve dat my gobbley had turned into a pig, ya! ya! ya!" he yelled, and then suddenly remembering something, he stopped suddenly brought his big mouth together with a loud snap, and suddenly began to look as serious as a wet hen.

"Wa—wa"—he gasped.

"What is the matter, Moses?" asked Mr. Bounce.

"Oh, I guess they'll bring it back all right. Wonder where they are?" he asked, calling Tommy.

But the boys had already skipped out of a back door and were by this time up to the house. The joke which Moses had helped laugh at didn't appear to be so funny now that he realized that he might not get his turkey back, so he started to find his tormentors, who, keeping out of sight, doubled on him, went back to the barn, restored the turkey to its place, and carried the pig back to where it had been left by Mr. Bounce.

In a few moments they managed to be found, and artfully pretended that they had just returned from going a nutting.

"Does yer gwine fer ter tell me dat yer habn't

been out dar to de barn a foolin' me an' your good ole fadder?" he asked earnestly.

"Why, how could we when we've been down here to the big chestnut tree?" asked Jakey, holding up a handful of nuts which he had gathered a few hours before.

This was a poser to Moses. He scratched his woolly head and began to look around for Mr. Bounce.

"What's the matter down to the barn, Moses?" asked Tommy, calmly.

"Matta! jis you come down heah an' let me show you what de matta is," said he, starting towards the barn.

The boys exchanged winks and followed.

"I had a turkey an' somebody change it for a pig," said he, just as he reached the barn door.

"Nonsense. Don't believe it," said Jakey.

"Look da den!" said he, pointing to the barrel.

The boys looked and began to laugh. Moses looked, and seeing the change, he began to drop his lower jaw and to expose his awful opening as his astonishment grew greater and greater. As for words, he had none.

"I say, Moses, I know what's the matter with you," said Tommy, "been drinking so much hard cider lately, you have got the jimmies. The idea of calling that a pig."

"Yes; you must have 'em awful bad, Moses," suggested Jakey, at which they both laughed.

"Boys, dis yere barn am haunted," said he, at length.

"Nonsense!"

"I know it am, an' I wudn't eat dat yer turkey no more dan I wud a skunk."

"Bah! the turkey is all right. It's the goose that has been drinking the cider who is wrong."

"Wal, if dat am so I'll nebber smell ob a glass ob cider again, shuah."

"That's right; keep sober and things won't appear so mixed up to yon, Moses," suggested Tommy, as he and Jakey turned toward the house.

"By golly, I's jes gwine for to keep dis yere turkey whar I ken lay my eye on him all de time, an' if I catch him comin' any more keridos round hear, I'll fro it away, shuah," said he, taking the bird by the legs and starting with it toward the house.

On the way he met Mr. Bounce and his friend, Mr. Jump.

"Did you find your turkey, Moses?"

"Yes, Massa Bounce, I got him, but dar am sumfin' about it dat I don't understand', for when I went back dar wid de poys, for to show 'em dat pig, dar wasn't no pig dar at all, but dar lay my turkey. It's dreful disterious," said the old darkey, solemnly.

"Oh, I guess it's only a little game that the boys

have been playing on you. They are full of their pranks, you know," said he cheerfully.

Moses trudged along toward the house to find a safe place for his bird, all the while trying to get the mystery through his mind. He knew very well that the boys were capable of almost anything in the shape of deviltry, but how to account for it all was too great a problem for him. But he resolved to keep a sharp eye on them hereafter.

But Tommy wasn't done with him yet. The very spirit of mischief was in him and must come out. So he kept an eye on Moses and his turkey.

He had an hour or two yet to work before he started to go home, and so he placed his turkey on a wash bench in the wood-shed and went about his business. But for the next five or ten minutes he would glance towards it to see that the boys were not molesting it.

After a turkey has been picked it has to be held over a blaze to singe off the hairs and pin feathers that still remain.

Tommy knew this, and as that yet remained to be done before the turkey presented the clean appearance that Moses would wish it to have before taking it home to his Dinah, he resolved to have one more joke with it.

He had a few fire crackers which had been left over from last fourth of July.

Taking one of them he crawled into a window at the back of the wood-shed, cut a hole in the neck of the turkey and thrust the cracker into it out of sight, leaving only a short bit of the stem sticking out.

Then he went to do some chores for his mother, who noticed the broad grin on his face.

"What are you grinnin' about, Thomas Bounce?" she asked, sharply, mistrusting that he was up to some mischief or other.

"Nothing, mammy; I was only thinking what a nice time we are going to have to-morrow," he replied, honestly.

"Well, you be precious careful how you carry sail, young man, for if I catch you up to any of your pranks, I'll have your father peel the hide all off you. Do you hear?"

"Oh, yes, mammy."

"Well, see that you take heed."

"Honest Injun, mammy."

"Now bring me in a pail of water and some wood right away."

"All right!" said he, and away he went with a bound.

Not long after that Moses finished his work and went to look after the turkey.

He found it just where he had left it, and not wishing to interfere with Mrs. Bounce in the kitchen,

he built a little fire out in the yard between the barn and the house.

"What're you doing, Moses?" asked Mr. Bounce.

"Seh, I'se gwine for ter swinge my turkey," said he.

"Oh, all right. Tommy, bring out our two, and let him singe them at the same time. It will prevent a smell in the house.

Nothing could please young mischief so well, and so he brought them out to Moses, who stood watching and encouraging the little fire he had started. He was happier now than ever, and sang:

"Gobbler sat on de ole barn door,
Go 'long,
But he won't set dar any more,
Go 'long, John.
De gobbler up an' tumble down,
Go 'long.
I'll pick him clean an' do him brown,
Go 'long, John, go 'long."

He took one of the turkeys from Tommy, and while singing held it carefully over the blaze. Jakey and their sisters stood around watching the performance, and Mr. Bounce and his company were also watching and listening to the fellow's singing:

"Gobbler winkin' at de pig,
Go 'long;
Rooster crow and feet so big,
Go long, John.
De turkey she took down her comb,
Go 'long,
An' say 'good-bye, thanksgivings come,
Go 'long, John, go 'long."

"Dar, dem's all right; ebery fedder an' hair am clean gone from dem turkeys slick as grease," said he, handing the second one back to Tommy.

"Now singe your own, Moses," said he.

"Dat yer am jes what I am gwine for o do, 'unny, an' den I'll fetch him home to Dinah, an' make her stick her eyes out like boiled eggs."

Saying which, he took up his turkey and stooping over the fire began to singe it, at the same time starting on another verse of his song.

He worked over it for about a minute, but when he came to the neck where the stem of the fire-cracker protruded, there was a quick fizz, followed by an explosion giving forth a startling and peculiar sound.

Moses yelled, dropped his turkey and ran as if the very old boy was after him.

If it were possible for a darkey to turn pale, Moses would have undoubtedly done so. As it was he stood a little way off regarding that turkey with wonder and amazement depicted on his black face, while the others gathered to learn the cause of the trouble.

"Keep back, dar!" he yelled, motioning them away. "De very debil am in dat yer gobbler. I knows berry well; it's 'witched."

Mr. Bounce took up the turkey to examine it.

"Careful dar, it'll bite yer!" cried Moses.

"Don't be a fool, Moses," said Mr. Bounce.

"No. I won't be fool 'nough ter eat dat turkey."

Mr. Bounce smelled the powder and putting his finger into the fractured neck he pulled out the remains of the exploded cracker. Turning to Tommy, he asked, "How did that fire-cracker get in there?"

"Guess the gobbler must have swallowed it last Fourth of July," replied Tommy, with a sickly smile.

"And do you expect me to swallow that story, sir? Come into the wood-shed with me," said he, taking him by the ear.

Moses began to see the point then, Mrs. Bounce also comprehended it.

"By golly, dat yer am de wus boy dat ebber was," he said, turning to Mr. Jump.

"Hide him, Josiah?" screamed Mrs. Bounce, "Peel it all off him!"

Well, space will not permit me to go any further this time, but in the next chapter I will give an account of what happened Thanksgiving Day.

CHAPTER VIII.

POOR Tommy Bounce! He got the bitter after en-joying his sweet.

The reader will remember that we parted with Tommy as his father was holding him by the ear and steering him for the wood-shed. And they will also remember the tricks that he played on the old darkey, Moses, and his turkey.

Having been caught at his old tricks was what the matter was with him now, and Mr. Bounce was fully determined not only to pay him for old and new, but to give him enough to keep him good and serious over the next day, which was Thanksgiving.

So poor Tommy got warmed, greatly to the delight of his mother, who believed that nothing short of a daily hiding would ever redeem him from the influence of Old Nick.

But to save his life, and notwithstanding the flogging he was receiving, he could not help laughing at the thought of the comicalities of Moses when the fire-cracker exploded in the neck of his turkey, and he dropped it and ran for his life. And his father had to struggle with himself to keep from laughing also, and it is more than likely that he would have left the flogging half done had he not been encouraged by his wife.

"Give it to him, Josiah! Give it to him, the mischievous varmint!" she kept on saying.

As for Moses, it was some time before he could get the joke through his wool.

"By golly for jingoes, but dat am de wuss mischievous boy dat I ebber seed in my life. All de time up to some pranks wid folks, an' me 'specially. Nebber seed so much deviltrum wrapped up in a boy's hide afore. An' he keep such a sober face on him all the while dat you dink dat he wor the mos' honest, goodey-good boy in the worl'. Nebber seed nuffin' like it, nebber."

"What did he do?" asked Mr. Jump, Mrs. Bounce's uncle, who had come to spend Thanksgiving with them.

"Wha' did he do? Why, sah, he knowed that I wor a-goin' for ter singe de hars off my turkey, an' so he cut a hole in de neck an' put in a fire-cracker. Golly, how it did make me skip. Tort dat de debble wor in dat turkey, suah."

Mr. Jump laughed and turned away.

"An' I am not so suah 'bout dem turkeys in de barn, even," he added, scratching his head. "Don't b'lieve dat a little cider would make such a fool ob me as dat. But I'll jis take dis yer bird right along home to my Dinah afore somethin' more happens," saying which he tucked it under his arm and started for his home, a mile or two away.

It was now nearly dark, and after supper and family service the children were packed off to bed, while the old folks got up and gossiped until nearly midnight.

"You got out of that pretty nicely," said Tommy to Jakey, after they had gone to bed.

"Well, I don't like lickings so well as you do," replied Jakey.

"But you like fun as well as I do, and I suppose you think it bully for you to see me get a switch-ing."

"No; but one at a time is as much as dad can 'tend to. But did you ever see such a comical sight as when Moses dropped that turkey and skedaddled?"

Both boys laughed several minutes.

"I thought I should have busted," added Jakey, holding his sides.

"So did I. But, I say, Jakey, wan't it mean in them old snoozers, Mr. Bounce and Mr. Jump, encouraging dad to give it to me with a gad every day?"

"Yes, and the old woman, too; they told mother that if she spared the rod they would surely spoil us, the old frauds."

"Yes, how they preached at supper. What business is it of theirs?"

"I'd just like to play some game on them before they go home, just to get even with them, the old busybodies."

"Never you mind. I'll get even with them before they go!" replied Tommy.

"I wonder what they are doing now?"

"Oh, chinning, I suppose."

Then both boys got into bed, and for the next five minutes were engaged in planning something or other.

"I say, Jakey, I know what we'll do. Let's frighten them."

"How?"

"They are all down in the sitting-room right under us. I'll fix it, keep quiet," said he, getting out of bed.

It happened at that time that the old folks below were engaged in telling about an old haunted house in town, and, in fact, the whole conversation was upon ghosts and goblins.

Tommy had a fishing-rod in his room, and taking off his night-shirt he proceeded to make a "ghost."

To do it he took a stick about three feet long, the "backbone" of a kite, run it through the arms in such a way as to hold them both out straight. Then he attached his fish-line to the center of this stick, and found that it balanced nicely, allowing the shirt to hang perpendicular and the arms to be outstretched.

The night was dark, but the light from the lamp shone out from the uncurtained window of the sitting-room where the company were assembled.

The line was attached to the end of the fishing-rod, and when all was completed, Tommy swung it out of his chamber window, being enabled to keep it quite a distance away from the house by the length of the rod.

Mr. Bounce had treated his company to cider once or twice, and as it was pretty strong, and because some of them had become slightly nervous on account of the ghost stories that had been told, they had braced up their nerves pretty freely.

"You needn't tell me nothing 'bout ghosts," said Eli Bounce, Mr. Bounce's uncle, "for I don't believe in nothing of the sort."

"Oh, I do," replied his wife.

"And so do I," put in Mrs. Jump, "for don't the Bible speak of them?"

"Nonsense," said Mr. Jump; "I'd just like for to see one once; I don't believe there ever was such a thing."

"Why, Ebenezer Jump! How can you go on so wicked, when the Bible mentions 'em? You hadn't orter talk so."

"Can't help it—I don't believe in 'em, nohow!" he replied loudly, for the cider was working.

"Nor me neither," put in Eli Bounce.

"Eli Bounce, I hope you're not goin' to be a back-slider," said his wife.

"Why! Uncle Eli!" exclaimed Tommy's mother.

"Can't help it. I never seen a ghost in my life,

an' I'm bound not to believe in 'em till I do see one."

"It's all imagination," said Mr. Jump.

"Ha! ya!" screamed Mrs. Bounce, suddenly springing up, and flopping down into her husband's lap. "Look! look!" she screamed, pointing out of the window.

Tommy was dangling his "ghost" backward and forward, and every time it came into the lamplight from the window, it looked ghostly enough.

"Bal! bal!" yelled Mrs. Ely Bounce, tumbling into her husband's arms. "It's a ghost! Take me away!"

"Oh! oh! oh!" moaned Mrs. Josiah Bounce, pulling her husband from his chair, and getting behind him.

"Mercy! mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Jump.

"Save us! save us!" whispered Eli Bounce—which came the nearest being a genuine prayer of anything he had ever given utterance to.

"Oh, dear!" put in Josiah Bounce, while such a chattering of teeth was never heard before, ghost or no ghost.

"Has it gone?" asked Mrs. Bounce, peeking cautiously out from behind her husband.

"Nol nol! There it goes again!"

"Oh, Eli, it was sent as a warnin' agin' yer unbelief," moaned Mrs. Bounce.

"Ebenezer, only think of it. Only think of your wickedness!" put in Mrs. Jump.

"Oh, I'm awful sorry for what I said. I—I—do believe in ghosts. I—"

"Yes, we all believe in ghosts," chimed Mrs. Josiah Bounce.

"Please go away, good ghost."

"Oh, there it comes again!"

"It's coming in the window. Oh! oh!"

"Help! help!" yelled the whole party; and such a getting out as took place in that room was never seen before.

Tommy was listening to it all, and when he heard them going out, he quickly pulled his "ghost" in, put everything in place again, and both of them jumped into bed, and pretended to be asleep.

But there was no danger, for the entire party took refuge in the kitchen, and refused to leave it—in fact they slept there all night, not daring to go to their chambers, while Tommy and Jakey laughed themselves to sleep over the fun they had enjoyed.

Mrs. Jump and Mrs. Eli Bounce did nothing all night long but to lecture their husbands for being so wicked and unbeliefing as to cause ghosts to rise. And the poor men were sorry enough for what they had said.

But a prayer meeting in the kitchen was the result of it all, and so perhaps some good came of it.

The next morning Mr. Bounce went out to take a look around the house to see if any trace had been left by the ghost, but there was never a track to be found.

It dampened the spirit of that festive holiday wonderfully, and in spite of the good things to eat, everyone wished themselves anywhere but there.

Tommy and Jakey came down to breakfast in the morning with their faces pulled down honestly, and with a determination, of course, to appear to know nothing wrong. But when they caught sight of those six frightened and melancholy-looking mugs they could not stand it, and so went out to the barn, where they laughed and roared to their heart's content.

Their mother overheard them, and at once suspected something wrong. Up to this moment she had never doubted but that the apparition swaying before the sitting-room window the night before was a genuine ghost; but now she suspected that "them awful boys" knew something about it.

As this conviction came upon her it drove away her superstitious fear, and she began to grow mad.

"Do you know I don't believe that was a ghost we saw last night?" said she, as they all gathered at breakfast.

"Why, Maria Bounce!" exclaimed the two women, holding up their hands.

"Don't be wicked, Maria," pleaded her husband, sorrowfully.

"No, sir; I believe them boys know all about it," said she, firmly.

The group exchanged glances.

"What makes you think so, Maria?"

"Wal, you know what pesky critters they are, Josiah?"

Josiah bowed in acknowledgment that he did know all about it.

"And didn't you notice how full of mischief they looked when they came down this morning?"

"I thought they looked uncommonly happy," suggested Mr. Jump.

"Yes, and just now I heard them out to the barn a laughing ready to split 'bout something. Oh, I'm sure of it."

"Don't be wicked, Maria."

"Don't be foolish, Josiah."

"But how could they do it?"

"Do it! How can they do a dozen things that they are always doing? I'll bet my old shoes that they know something about it."

"Somehow I can't believe it, Maria."

"Well, I'll do, and they've got to have a hiding before they get any breakfast."

"Guess it would be a safe thing to do anyway," said Mr. Jump.

"Spare the rod, spoil the child," put in Mrs. Eli Bounce.

"Got ter lick children awfully now-a-days, times is so bad," Mr. Eli.



When the fire-crackers exploded, Moses yelled, dropped his turkey, and ran as if the very Old Boy was after him.

"Well, in the name of goodness, don't I punish him enough?" asked Mr. Bounce. "There isn't a day that I don't baste him."

"That's all right, so you have to pull weeds out of the garden every day, in order to prevent them choking the garden sass, don't ye?" asked Eli.

The bare possibility that a joke might have been played on them wrought a great change in the spirits of the party, and before breakfast was over, each one of them had got over being frightened, and felt as if their mission was to flog our heroes.

By the time breakfast was over Tommy and Jakey had had their laugh out, and with uncommonly sober faces they went into the house for the purpose of taking their turn at the second table.

The company withdrew into the sitting-room, leaving the parents alone with their children. The boys saw there, w^s a cloud gathering and it naturally made them even more sober than they would otherwise have been.

"Thomas Bounce," his mother began, "what was you doing last night?"

"Me? sleeping, mammy," he replied looking up, but with a sly'it blush in spite of himself.

"What else, sir?"

"Snoring I guess."

"What else, sir?"

"A dreaming; why?"

"What did you dream?"

"I dreamed I see a ghost."

This completely took his parents aback, and they looked at each other in surprise.

"Don't say anything more about it," suggested Mr. Bounce, half aside to his wife.

"Yes, I will, I shan't enjoy my Thanksgiving one bit if them boys don't get the hide peeled off of them," said she resolutely.

"What have we been doing?" asked Jakey.

"You know all about it; you know what you was up to last night, and if your father don't make you both so sore that you can't sit down, why I will, that's all there is about it."

"Pretty rough, I think when a fellow has to get licked for nothing," suggested Tommy.

"You leave this to me, Maria. Boys, come out to the barn with me after you eat your breakfast," said Mr. Bounce, going out of the room.

But they both told such straight, smooth stories that their father could not find it in his heart to flog them, and so they escaped with a warning to mind their actions during the day, and beware of the wrath to come.

The party appeared to feel much better, and gradually grew into better spirits, although Mr. Jump

or Eli Bounce did not venture their disbelief in ghosts. So the festivities of the day soon won attractiveness.

About noon Mrs. Bounce went for the turkeys to roast them. On uncovering them what was her astonishment at finding four instead of two, all nicely dressed and picked, although only two of them were singed.

"Josiah Bounce, come here," she called, sharply.

Josiah hustled into the kitchen. She pointed to the row of turkeys.

"Are you crazy, Josiah Bounce?"

Josiah wasn't certain about whether he was or not, and so stood there, looking first at the turkeys and then at the flushed face of his wife.

"How long do you expect to keep out of the poor-house if you go on this way? What on earth possessed you to kill four turkeys, when even two were more than we wanted?"

The reader will remember about how those turkeys came to be killed.

"Maria, I don't understand it," he said at length.

"No, I guess you don't. Five turkeys out of seven gone. What foolishness."

"But, Maria, I don't understand it. I only killed two."

"Josiah Bounce, how much cider did you drink yesterday?"

"Not more than a pint or two," meekly replied Josiah.

"A pint or two; a quart of hard cider! It's no wonder you didn't know what you were doing, Josiah Bounce. Is that the right way for a professed Christian and the father of a family to conduct himself? Supposing this thing should get out into the neighborhood? Wouldn't that be a nice mess?"

"I—I tell you, Maria, there's a mistake somewhere. Moses must have killed them."

And so Moses did, but they did not know how he came to do so.

"Josiah Bounce, I'm ashamed of you. Go away and leave me alone," said she, waving him from the room.

Josiah did not wait for any further orders or argument.

He wanted a little time to collect his thoughts and consult with the boys, for surely they must know something about the strange affair.

But the boys were away in the woods gathering nuts, and Mr. Bounce puzzled his head over the problem for some time without coming to any solution of it.

Finally he mounted a horse and rode over to

where Moses lived to see if he knew anything about the affair.

"Fo' de Lor', Massa Bounce, I don't can't come for ter understand it no how. Four turkeys killed?"

"Yes, and yours makes five."

"I—I tolle yer dat was witchery goin' on 'bout dem burds."

"How so?"

"Didn't I go for ter tolle yer dat I kill dat burd o' mine free times, an' he wouldn't stay killed at all? An' den didn't he turn into a dead pig at last, and den back inter a dead gobbler agin? I tells yer what, Massa Bounce, I—I don't feel zactly right 'bout eatin' dis yer burd o' mine, nohow."

"Nonsense. I guess the cider got into your head, and you killed four instead of two."

"Dat may be, but I don't believe it," replied Moses, shaking his head from side to side.

"Well, I do."

"I tells yer dat dem boys hab got somefin for ter do wid dat, suah."

"Nonsense," replied Mr. Bounce, turning and riding away, fully convinced now that Moses had drank too much cider and had made the mistake.

That solution partially satisfied his wife, and for the time being Tommy and Jakey were safe. But if the truth had been known!

Well, the Thanksgiving dinner went off all right, and was one of those good old-fashioned ones wherein there is more than enough, where every grown person eats enough to last a week, and every child keeps at it until their bellies begin to ache and their faces to look unhappy.

Neither Tommy or his brother felt half so lively after dinner as they had before; but taking Carlo, and the goat, Bucker, they went out for a romp and were soon feeling all right again, although not hungry by any manner of means.

After supper Mr. Jump and Eli Bounce went out for a walk and to take a look at the farm and its gathered stores.

They were arguing some religious question, and being hotly engaged, did not notice our heroes, who were playing near by. But our heroes noticed them, you had better believe, and as usual, mischief awoke in them.

"I tell you, Ebenezer Jump, that you are not sound. There is no truth in your hard-sifell Baptist doctrine," said Eli Bounce, hotly.

At that moment Tommy ran up to them innocently enough, and while asking one of them what time it was, he hooked a bit of red flannel to the tail of Mr. Jump's coat, while Jakey held the goat a short distance away. The goat had been taught to butt

that old piece of red cloth whenever he saw it; it was one of his new tricks.

"Oh, go 'long; don't bother," replied Mr. Jump, turning savagely upon Tommy.

"All right," said Tommy, turning away.

"Mind what you say, Eli Bounce; I don't 'low nobody to talk to me that way. I am a peaceable man, and everybody who says that my theology arn't right, is a cross-grained idiot, a mutton-head, and —"

At that moment Jakey let the goat go, and before Jump could finish his speech he had reached that piece of red flannel with his business end, and he knocked poor Jump sprawling.

Jump was too much stunned and confused to know the truth of the affair, but, supposing that Eli Bounce had hit him, he struggled to his feet and went for him.

Of course old Mr. Bounce defended himself, and for a moment it was give and take; when they clinched and at last both went down to grass, mauling, pulling hair, cursing and tearing each other's Sunday clothes.

In the meantime Tommy had called off the goat, and was holding him by the collar and looking at the fun.

But the wives of the two men had discovered them and came running out to separate them.

In this they were not successful, and while endeavoring to pull them apart, Mrs. Jump got mad because Mrs. Eli Bounce pulled her husband's hair, and then they gave up trying to separate them, and went right to work scratching and pulling each other's hair.

It was a right lively time, and when it was at its height Mr. and Mrs. Bounce rushed out to put a stop to it. This they at length succeeded in doing, but it was a hard job.

"Let me at him!" shouted Eli.

"Let him come on," yelled Jump. "I'll knock his Thanksgiving's dinner all out of him in the shake of a lamb's tail."

"Let me go, Maria Bounce," screamed Mrs. Jump. "I'll tear her eyes out, the good-for-nothing old hussy."

"Hold on, everybody," shouted Josiah Bounce. "What is this all about?"

"Yes, for heaven's sake, what does it all mean?" demanded his wife.

"This miserable, degraded wretch of an uncle of yours, knocked me down because I told him the truth."

"It's a lie."

"You did, and I can prove it by the boys, there, and I'll hammer your old mutton-head all off of you."

"No, you won't," said Mrs. Eli Bounce, trying to get at him.

"Yes, he will," put in Mrs. Jump; and it was with much difficulty that they were prevented from flying at each other again.

"Now, hold on. I am ashamed of you all; who would have believed it?"

"He began it."

"No, I did not."

"I'll leave it to the boys; they saw you."

"Well, come into the house, and we will settle it, and find out who's to blame. Tommy, come into the house."

The whole party started for the house in a most dilapidated and vengeful manner.

"Now for it, Jakey, keep a stiff upper lip," said Tommy, as they followed.

CHAPTER IX.

WE parted with our heroes and the company just after Eli Bounce and Ebenezer Jump had been indulging in a rough-and-tumble night, assisted by their wives, who had been drawn into it while attempting to separate their belligerent spouses.

It will be remembered that Mr. Jump and Eli Bounce were walking out for a little exercise after partaking of their Thanksgiving dinner, and that in a very adroit way Tommy Bounce had attached a bit of red cloth to Mr. Jump's coat-tail, and that the pet goat, "Bucker," had "gone for it," as he had been taught to do, and poor Jump had been sent to grass sprawling, under the belief that Mr. Bounce had struck him to clinch an argument.

Josiah Bounce and his wife, Tommy and Jakey's parents, succeeded in separating the combatants and demanding an explanation of their conduct; why two such staid old churchmen, like Eli Bounce and Ebenezer Jump, had so far forgotten themselves as to engage in a regular rough-and-tumble, up-and-down gouge fight.

Each had accused the other of commencing hostilities, and each referred to the boys, Tommy and Jakey, as witnesses of the whole affair, and therefore competent to say which had begun it.

Josiah Bounce and his wife, while keeping between the belligerents led the way back to the house, while the boys followed soberly behind.

"Keep your eye peeled, Jakey," said Tommy, as they entered the house. "They don't know how it happened, and we must pretend that the first thing we saw was when they were a-dueling into each other. Mind, now."

"All right."

"Now," said Josiah Bounce, as he motioned his soured and dilapidated guests to seats, "I wish to know all about this disgraceful affair. You are here both as my kinsmen and my guests, and for

that reason I have a right to know why you fall out, and chide and fight. Only think of it. You, Uncle Eli, a deacon of the church, and Ebenezer Jump, a church member and regarded as a model citizen, you two fighting!"

"Well, I tell you he began it."

"And I say I did not."

"You knocked me down, just because I told you that your doctrine wasn't sound."

"It is false. I never laid hands on you until you began the attack on me."

"I'll leave it to the boys."

"So will I," replied Eli.

"And you, Hulda Ann Jump," put in Mrs. Bounce. "I'm ashamed of you."

"Wal, I don't care if you are. You pulled Eben's hair, an' do you s'pose I'm going to stand that? Not any, if you please," replied Hulda Ann.

"She's a good-for-nothing old hussy," replied Mrs. Eli.

"What's that you say," shrieked Mrs. Jump, springing forward as though bent on fastening her fingers into the hair of her late antagonist.

"Nan, hold on. I won't have any more of this in my house," said Josiah.

"Now tell the truth, Tommy," said Uncle Eli.

"Speak right up, sonny," put in Ebenezer.

"Mind what you say, now, Thomas Bounce," suggested his mother.

All hands gathered around Tommy, who kept his face like a little hero.

"Who began the quarrel?" repeated his father.

"I didn't see anybody begin it," said he.

"What?"

"The first thing me and Jakey saw, as we were playing with the dog and goat, was both of them, one on top of the other, hammering and pulling like two old bruisers."

"Didn't you see him knock me down?" asked Mr. Jump.

"No."

"Didn't you see him hit me first?" asked Eli Bounce.

"No; the first thing we saw was both of you were going in red hot."

"Is that true, Jakey?" asked Mr. Bounce turning to his youngest boy.

"Yes, daddy, it's true."

"Mind your P's and Q's, Jacob Bounce," suggested his mother.

"All right, mammy."

"Honest Injun," put in Tommy.

"Then it appears that the boys knew no more about it than we do," suggested Mr. Josiah Bounce.

"Well, it's strange," said Mr. Jump.

"Yes, it's all strange, and a pretty wind-up it is to our Thanksgiving."

"Wal, it's all old Jump's fault," said Mrs. Eli Bounce.

"Don't you dare say that," yelled Mrs. Jump.

"Yes, she can."

"No, she can't," yelled Jump, squaring off to renew the conflict with old Eli.

"Hold on," screamed Mrs. Bounce.

"Yes, and one or the other of you have either got to apologize or go home," said Josiah.

"Well, I won't," said Jump, spanking his fists together, savagely.

"Nor I won't. Do you think I'd apologize to such a bundle of absurdities as that old Ebenezer Jump? No, I'd rot first," yelled Eli.

"Rot, hey? Twouldn't take you long."

"What's that you say, you old sheep stealer?" yelled Mrs. Bounce.

"Who do you call a sheep stealer? You had better look to home. How about that ham?"

"And how about that soft soap you stole?"

"How about these cabbages?"

"Don't you dare twit me."

"Yes, I will."

"No, you won't."

"Hold on."

"Go in, Hulda Ann."

"All right, I'll fix you."

In less than a few minutes, and in spite of all that Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Bounce could do, all hands were at it again, striking, pulling, cursing, tearing hair, and making things lively.

Over went chairs, tables, dishes, stove; and everything in the room seemed bent upon getting into the muss.

Mr. and Mrs. Bounce went in to separate the combatants, but getting one or two cracks themselves they forgot all about piety and decorum, and began to strike out right and left for themselves.

Tommy mounted a table and began to shout, while Jakey and the other children ran out of doors.

"Give it to him, daddy! Go for her, mammy! Get on his snuff-trap, daddy! Punch him in his bellows! Git a twist on her wig, mammy!" and in other ways encouraged the fun, for fun it was to him.

Ebenezer Jump and his wife were the first to get enough, and they hauled off for repairs, while Eli and Josiah still kept at it with a little to choose between them, and Mrs. Josiah had Mrs. Eli down and seemed to be trying to hammer a nail into the floor with her head.

But Eli and his wife soon concluded that they had got all they wanted, and begged to be excused, and all hands retired for water to wash bloody noses with.

The time for argument had passed, and as soon as both parties of the visitors could harness up their horses, and set out for home, they did so without so much as saying good-bye to anybody.

To Mr. and Mrs. Bounce it was one of the greatest mysteries they had ever encountered. What it all meant they could not for the life of them make out, any more than they could find out what began the fight between them.

As for Tommy and Jakey, they soon after found an opportunity for getting away, and going down to their swing by the creek, they enjoyed a long, hearty laugh over the affair, voting it the best thing they had ever known.

"Only think of it," said Tommy, "all that row because the goat butted the old man over."

"And he thought old Eli hit him. Ha! ha! ha! Never saw such fun in my life," said Jakey.

The two boys remained away until dark, and then took particular pains to go right to bed when they returned to the house, for they still felt so ticklish over the affair that they did not dare to trust themselves before their parents, lest their feelings should betray them.

On the following Monday Tommy left home for the academy at Andover, where he had been entered to have his education finished.

He felt pretty bad about going, for he had never been far from home before, and now he was leaving all behind and going out into a world of strangers, to enter upon almost a new life to him and to meet with new companions.

He was now fourteen years of age, and having got along pretty well at the district school, Mr. Bounce thought it best to send him away to the academy, for several reasons. In the first place he would be away from Jakey, and being thrown among strangers, it was probable he would soon forget some of his mischief and become more steady.

Phillips' Academy, at Andover, Mass., is one of the oldest and best seats of learning in the country, and it is pleasantly situated in one of the prettiest towns to be found anywhere in the world. The writer has spent many, many happy days there.

Tommy Bounce was received, placed in the junior class, and quartered in one of the dormitories with a boy about his own age named George Dovey, and before a day had passed he found out that "Dovey," as he was called by all the boys, was a lad after his own heart; full of life and fun, and always ready to engage in a lark.

But Tommy was a "freshman," a "jolly fish," as they turned them, and of course he had to be "hazed" and put through a course of sprouts by the elder boys before he could be called one of them.

So one night soon after he was admitted to the institution, about a dozen scholars of the higher classes visited him in his room, pretending that it was only a social call.

But soon after being seated one of them locked the door and placed the key in his pocket, after which each of the visitors took a pipe from his pocket and proceeded to fill it with tobacco, after which they lit them and began to smoke vigorously, all the while conversing innocently on various topics and completely throwing Tommy off his guard.

But the room soon filled with smoke, and he began to cough and sneeze at a fearful rate, after which he became sick, and begged them to allow him to open the window.

This of course they would not consent to, and so they smoked away until it was impossible to see across the room.

"Hark!" said one.

"Tis time," said another.

"Let us bounce Mr. Bounce," said a third.

"Come on."

Tommy was dazed and bewildered; what it all meant he couldn't for the life of him make out, for the life that he had entered upon was so new and peculiar that he could scarcely make head or tail of it.

The boys gathered around him, one on either side took his arms, while others opened the door and all hands started down stairs.

Reaching the street—which runs between two rows of buildings where the students' room—they started across Main Street, reaching which they conducted him across it and over it to the old stone building, standing about a quarter of a mile from the gymnasium, where the boys exercised all kinds of antics to develop their strength.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, and without stopping to light any lamps, all hands entered and locked the doors securely behind them.

Here it was quite dark, and in less time than it takes to write it, they all forsook our hero, and he found himself standing alone in a strange place, while they secreted themselves in various places.

A death-like silence pervaded the place and Tommy began to feel queer; what did it mean?

While he was grouping around and asking himself this question, a gong was savagely struck behind him, such a sound he had never heard before, and it made his very hair stand on end.

Again it sounded, and as its horrible tremors died away, a deep groan followed and was re-echoed from a dozen directions.

"Hello, boys! Say, where are you?" he asked.

But no reply came.

"Where are you, I say?" he again demanded, while his teeth chattered loudly.

"In the tomb!" said a voice behind him.

He turned to see from whence it came and again that dreadful gong sounded in his ears and confused him fearfully.

"Come here, boys!" he called, after a while.

"He calls!" said a sepulchral voice.

"Let us visit him!" said another, and in a mo-



"Ba! ba!" yelled Mrs. Eli Bounce, tumbling into her husband's arms. "It's a ghost! take me away!"

ment the big building was alive with a strange jar-
gon of voices and a clatter of feet.

Soon somebody lighted a candle, and placed it on a long pole, and several of the boys, dressed in cowls or long black cloaks, painted so as to make them look like skeletons, began to gather around him.

Tommy was frightened half out of his wits.

"Dovey, Dovey!" he called to his chum, but his friend made no reply.

They gathered around him, and while dancing weirdly in the faint light of the candle, they chanted a wild dirge that was enough to freeze the blood in a butcher.

This performance lasted five or six minutes, during which Tommy Bounce stood trembling and expecting that every moment was his last.

"Let us take him with us," said one.

"Yes, to the abode of shades let us take him."

"Aye, down below."

"No, no, don't touch me, please," pleaded Tommy, as they gathered around him.

"He called us; let us take him along."

"Aye, aye," replied the chorus.

"No, no, I don't want to go with you," said he, starting for the door.

"Bounce him!" yelled a deeper voice, and in less than half a minute Tommy was seized, thrown upon a sheet of canvas which several of them, held by the edges, and in spite of his cries and pleadings to be let alone, he was thrown ten or fifteen feet up into the air.

Of course they caught him on the sheet again when he came down, and still, all unhurt, they threw him upward again, giving him a bounce every time that sent him whirling over and over like a frog in mid air, only to be caught again and again sent up.

While this was going on, the building echoed to the most fiendish shouts and wild hurrahs. So loud, in fact, were they, that poor Tommy's voice could not be heard above the uproar. In fact he was almost too frightened to yell, and paid particular attention to saving his neck.

Finally, when he came down, they placed the canvas upon the floor, ceased all noise, and quickly withdrew out of sight, leaving Tommy to gather himself up the best he could.

But he was not long in gathering himself upon his feet, and then he began to try for some place to escape. He felt that he had been there long enough, and although he concluded that the boys had somehow something to do with it all, still he felt that he had got enough, and would escape, if he could only find an opportunity of doing so.

But every place was securely fastened, and all his calling only brought answers from the echoes in the building. He began to think he was in for it, sure enough.

Presently he heard a voice on the outside, and he called, but it made no reply.

Then there was a pounding on the door. He groped his way in the darkness to it.

"Are you there, Thomas Bounce?" asked the voice.

"Yes—let me out," replied Tommy.

"Where are you?"

"Here," he replied.

In a moment he heard the key thrust into the lock, and the door swung open.

"Why, how came you here?" asked one of the boys.

"How did I come here? Why, you brought me here, of course," said he.

The boys piled into the room, all looking innocently surprised at seeing him.

"Why, we've lost you. Where have you been?"

"Here, I guess, only I don't know exactly where I have been a part of the time," he replied, going out into the moonlight.

"Here in the haunted building!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"I should say it was haunted."

"Did you see anything?" they all asked.

"I should say so."

"Ghosts?"

"Any quantity of them. Come, let's go." he added, edging away.

"I knew it. This building is haunted, and whenever a new student comes within reach of the ghosts and goblins they seize him and put him through an awful course of sprouts. What did they do to you?"

Tommy looked from one to the other, for he strongly suspected that they knew all about it, but they all put on such honest faces that he was completely fooled, and so told them all that had happened.

Then they pretended to feel very sorry for him, and told him he must be careful how he approached the building hereafter.

This over with, they started back towards his room from whence they had taken him.

On the way they met Dovey, Tommy's chum, and he artfully pretended that he was out in search of his friend as he was afraid he had got lost, and the whole company retired to the room, where some oysters and lager beer awaited them.

Tommy had never tasted either, and so he made

up his mind that there was a treat and lots of fun in store for him.

They gave him one oyster, which he liked very much, but that was all. The remainder was eaten by the boys, and he was only allowed to smell of the fragrant stews, although they pretended all the while that he was eating and enjoying himself hugely.

As for the beer, they did not even give him a taste, but drank it all themselves, while seeming to drink with him. They praised the German beer; sang jolly songs in honor of it; clicked their glasses over his head, but never a mouthful did they allow him to get.

This was more mystery to him, although he thought he saw the joke, and after the feast had been disposed of, they again took out their pipes and began to smoke.

This is what they call "hazing" in colleges and schools, although it varies with different schools and at the expense of different students.

They left that night about twelve o'clock, after having put Tommy through "sprouts" enough they thought, and from that night he was regarded as "regular," and at liberty, not only to participate in all their sports, but to assist them in putting any other freshman through when an opportunity presented itself.

This was all very well, but Tommy, like many another hazed wight, refused to see the fun in it, as applied to him. He wouldn't have hesitated a moment in putting any other chap through, but like hundreds of other boys in this world, he couldn't bear to have the jokes played upon him. He had always been used to having the fun on his side, not to being the victim of it, and so he resolved to "get even" with those who had helped put him through so savagely.

One fellow, Joe Smith, had not only been the leader in initiating him into the dark and ragged-edged mysteries, but he had taken particular pains to speak of Tommy's experience, and to exaggerate upon his expressions and actions while being put through.

So Tommy made up his mind to commence paying off the old score with Master Joe Smith, and take the others in turn.

There was a place down in the cellar which was sometimes used for a wash-room, although it was quite dark, but during the cold weather it was not often used for that purpose. But the janitor always had a pail of water standing there ready.

One thawy day in spring the boys, while out at recess, engaged at snowballing as usual, and Tommy and Joe Smith got into a rough and tumble. The

bell rang just in time to prevent more serious consequences, for both of the boys were game to the last.

Joe made his brags that he would fix Tommy the next day, and excitement ran quite high over the affair.

But Tommy was not the lad to take water from any one, although he was nothing of a brag. He would sooner be in for some fun than for a fight, but when it came to the scratch he was not a whit behind them.

He made up his mind just what he would do, and the first thing was to empty about a quart of ink into the pail of water which stood on the wash-bench down in the cellar.

This being done he was ready for what followed. Recess was announced and the whole school rushed out and gathered around to see the fun between Joe and Tommy.

They did not have to wait long, for Joe went swaggering to our hero, saying:

"Bouncy, old boy, I'm going to wash your face."

"All right, come on," replied Tommy, placing his hands in his pockets, and regarding the bully calmly.

"It'll do you good, Bouncy."

"Yes, I guess it will."

As he said this, Joe stooped and picked up a handful of snow and started for Tommy.

But our hero was too quick for him, and as he attempted to seize him around the neck, Tommy caught him by the collar, gave him a quick trip, and threw him upon the broad of his back quicker than you could say Jeremiah Robinson.

The boys shouted with delight. But no sooner did Tommy have him down than he mounted him, and taking up a handful of mud he rubbed it all over his face in no neat or genteel way,

"Going to wash my face, are you?"

"Lemme up!" shouted Joe.

"No, I won't till you take water."

"Guess he needs water now," said Dovey, Tommy's friend.

"Let him up," shouted several of Joe's friends, crowding around.

"No, he won't," said Dovey. "Joe began it, now let him get what he deserves."

"Do you care?" asked Tommy, giving him another plaster of mud.

"Yes, let me up."

"And will you mind your own business?"

"Yes."

"And take back what you said?"

"Yes, yes."

"All right; now get."

Joe Smith got up, looking crestfallen enough, and as though he had been rooting in the mud, hog fashion, but he didn't attempt to resent it.

Just then the bell rang, and Joe darted down the cellar stairs in the entry for the purpose of washing himself, while the other boys shook Tommy by the hand and congratulated him on his plucky victory over "Bully Joe," as he was called.

In the meantime Joe was down stairs, washing his face and hands in the inky water which Tommy had prepared for him.

The remainder of the school went to their seats with smiling faces, and the exercises went on as if nothing had happened.

In about ten minutes Joe came upstairs and into the school-room, looking as much like a negro as it is possible for ink and water to make one look.

Almost a shout of laughter and derision greeted him, but as he could not see his own face, and it being almost dark down in the cellar, he supposed they were laughing over his late humiliation.

"Silence!" roared Mr. Eaton, one of the teachers; but the laughter could not be stopped so easily.

"Silence, I say; what is this all about?"

Just at this moment he caught sight of Joe, who was standing composed and wondering in the aisle, and he almost forgot himself and laughed too.

"Joseph Smith, come here, sir," he cried.

Joseph obeyed, wonderingly.

"What is the matter with your face, sir?"

"Got some mud on it," he stammered.

"I should say so, some very black mud. Go down stairs and wash yourself, sir."

"I just this moment did, sir," whereat the whole school laughed.

"Mr. Pike," said the teacher, calling to the janitor, "take this young man down stairs, and see if you can't assist in washing him."

The janitor did as requested, but before making the discovery of the ink in the water he had given another coat of black. The result of it was that poor Joe became the laughing stock of the whole school, while Tommy was from that day a favorite with the scholars, if not with the teachers.

But Joe Smith suspected him of putting ink in the water, and resolved to get even with him in some way. We shall see whether he does or not.

CHAPTER X.

ATTACHED to the academy at Andover was a janitor by the name of Pike—Erasmus Pike.

Although he refused to call himself a janitor, and luxuriated, in his estimation at least, under the heavier and more consequential title of steward.

Pike was a character.

How well the writer remembers him, and how well he remembers the writer, no doubt.

He was a tall, stoop-shouldered, ginger-haired son of a Baptist; ill-natured, tyrannical with his petty authority; a man who delighted to lick the boots of his superiors in authority, but who took every occasion to torment and make uncomfortable those beneath him.

This was especially the case as between the professor, the teachers and the scholars.

He was continually acting the part of a spy upon their actions and reporting everything he could find out against them.

Many and many were the poundings he had received at the hands of the older students, until, at this time, he was more cautious about reporting any of their doings out of school, and turned his attention to the younger boys.

With freshmen, and new scholars in general, he made himself very lordly and obnoxious, ordering them here and there, telling them what they could and could not do, and often flogged them if they refused to obey him.

With the faculty of the institution he was quite popular; but there never was a student at Andover who did not detest him for his many meannesses.

As naturally as a dog scents out a bone did Pike discover that he would have trouble with our hero, Tommy Bounce, and he made up his mind to put a curb-rein upon him at the outset and break the spirit of mischief without loss of time. But for once he had met his match.

With the cunning of a fox, and the scent of a sleuth-hound, did the janitor work over the mystery regarding the ink in the wash-pail down in the cellar, the same in which Joe Smith had washed, and putting this and that together, in a manner that would have done credit to a detective, he proved pretty clearly that Tommy was the culprit.

The result was Tommy got chased by a lively rattan in the hands of the teacher, this being his first flogging since entering the academy.

But the reader knows by this time that Tommy Bounce was not the lad to put up with anything of this kind without coming a back hand-spring on somebody, and in this case that somebody was intended to be no other than Pike, the janitor.

Pike made it a point to go around listening to the various rooms in the dormitories to see if he could catch any of the boys sitting up later than nine o'clock, or doing any of the many things against the rules.

Now Tommy and his chum, or room-mate, Dovey, were altogether too wide awake to be forced to go to bed at just such a time every night, and there were dozens of others just like them in that particular.

All they lacked was a ringleader to revolt quite often. This ringleader they soon discovered in Tommy Bounce; and it was no unusual thing to find from half a dozen to a dozen fellows in his room, anywhere between supper and midnight.

This fact Pike was not long in finding out, and of course the affair was reported to Professor Taylor, which led to three or four floggings, several lectures, and a threat of expulsion from the school.

But this state of affairs could not long keep the boys away from Tommy's room, and Pike was soon found nosing around like the thief he was.

One night the boys were to have some oysters, and make some stews in Tommy's room, but the fear of being caught by the janitor made several of them quite uneasy.

"Never you fear," said Tommy, as a party of them were on their way from school that night. "I have a dose for 'old Nosey' that will make him sick, you bet!"

"What is it, Tommy?" asked several.

"Never mind now. You fellows all come to my room to-night, and you will see some fun. Now don't forget it."

The boys knew him well enough by this time to believe what he said, and so they all made it a point to gather at his room soon after dark.

The oysters and everything for a feast had been procured, and Dovey was making ready to cook them. He was a first-rate cook, and this was not the first time he had prepared a supper for them.

"Now, are we all here?" asked Tommy.

"Yes, all here," answered several.

"Well, all right. Now, then, for the trap."

"A trap?"

"A trap for old Nosey," said he, taking up a pail full of slops and very dirty water.

"What are you going to do with that?"

"Follow me and you will see."

The room occupied by Tommy and his chum, Dovey, was connected with another room by a door, which was locked, and nobody knew where the key was, unless the janitor did.

The next room into which this door opened was not occupied, the young fellow who had formerly been there happening to be at home on a visit.

Tommy had somewhere found a key which would unlock this door, and he now proceeded to unlock it.

The key of the door also opened the one leading into the hall.

Tommy's room being at the head of the stairs, and being also much more exposed to the draft than the others were, had a second or outside door, built about two feet from the door leading from the entry into his room.

This double door made it very inconvenient for Pike, for unless he could open the outer one he could not hear what was going on, or who was in the room.

Tommy opened this outside door about a foot, and then getting on to a chair he lifted the pail of water and set it on the top edge of the door, allowing it to lean over against the wall just enough to keep it in position, and then putting a cork under the bottom rail between it and the floor, the whole trap was set in a firm but ticklish manner.

"There, if he goes to pull that door open to see what we are up to, he'll get as healthy a drop as ever he got," said Tommy.

"Oh, isn't that bully?" exclaimed several.

"Now let us get in out of this."

"Yes, for old Nosey will soon be around, no doubt," said Harry Sanborn.

"And if he don't bring his umbrella, he will be apt to be caught in a shower," said Ned Field, laughing.

"Come."

In a few moments they were all back in Tommy's room again, the doors all locked, the key to the partition door hidden, and then all hands turned to the oyster feast, which Dovey had by this time got nearly ready.

In those days oyster stews were the greatest treat that could possibly be had, and in a few minutes the boys were so deeply interested that they forgot all about the trap they set, and were laughing and joking merrily over the fragrant stews.

"I say, fellows, I've got a new name for Dovey," said Tommy.

"What is it?" asked several.

"Stew-dent."

"Good! good!" was the cry; and while the laugh was up they heard a frightful racket outside, a swash of water, a fall of the pail, together with the yell of their victim, and a lively scrambling generally. If an old army mule had tumbled over in a crockery store he could not have made more noise.

The janitor had succeeded in doing exactly what they expected and wished him to do, and as the boys were all posted in their parts, they opened the door quickly, rushed out armed with whatever they could lay hands upon first, some with pillows, some with more water, and began an assault upon the discomfited victim.

"Here's the goat, boys, give it to him," shouted Tommy, as he led the van and hit the janitor a tremendous bang with a pillow.

"Yes, give it to him! We'll learn him to come up here and eat our books and things," said Dovey.

"Hang him!"

"Run him!"

"Waltz him," came the shouts, while each one of them banged away at the luckless janitor as he groped and gasped there in the dark, half choked with the dirty water.

"Hold on! Hey, hey, what are you doing? Hold on I say, you young scorpions, don't you know me?"

"Give it to him," yelled Tommy.

But Pike had no notion of standing still and receiving any more compliments there in the dark. So he made a break and ran dripping into the room, while all the boys but Tommy and Dovey ran down stairs and made good their escape without being recognized.

"What, is that you, Mr. Pike?" exclaimed Tommy, looking the picture of surprise.

"Mr. Pike!" put in Dovey.

"Yes, you young rascallions, it's me," said he, spitting and wiping his face on his coat sleeve, "and you know it."

"What. How should we suspect that you would be sneaking around our door?" asked Dovey.

"What did you have that pail of water up there for?" he demanded, angrily.

"Well, I'll tell you. You know the old goat; well, he has got a great notion of coming up here and mousing around the hall, and so we thought we'd set a trap and learn him better," said Tommy.

"I don't believe a word of it, you young rascals," almost screamed Pike.

"Honest Injun."

"Yes, he came up here the other night and ate up my algebra that happened to be laying on the coal-box," said Dovey.

This rather puzzled the doused janitor.

"I—I don't believe a word of it," said he, at length.

"Honor bright."

"Why, how could we think that such a nice man as you are would be snoozing around our door at night? No, we wanted to souse the goat and learn him to keep down stairs," said Tommy, with honest earnestness.

"If—if I only thought!"

"Oh, how can you?"

"Mind your eye, I'll catch you at some of your deviltry yet," said he, shaking his fist at them as he went from the room.

"Oh, no, we never do anything wrong," said Tommy, going to the door and speaking as the janitor was going down stairs.

"Look out for me, that's all," were his parting words.

"Oh, won't we look out for him?" said Tommy, shutting the door and turning to Dovey.

"But wasn't that good though?"

"Good, worked to a charm."

"He looked like a rat fished out of a slop-barrel, ha! ha! ha!"

Both boys laughed loud and long, and they heard laughs coming from other rooms in the building, the occupants of which had overheard enough to understand what the tumult was all about.

Before noon the next day the joke was known to every scholar in school, and the fun it made,



Tommy Bounce at it again. He put some ink in the water with which Joe washed his face.

The laughter and gibes it occasioned at the expense of the janitor would have driven any other man to suicide.

From that night he was known as "Old Slopbacket," and if he is living the name probably clings to him yet.

But he resolved to get even with Tommy Bounce, and to have him expelled from school if possible. He knew that there were goings on in his room which were against the rules of the academy, and he made up his mind to watch and catch them at it.

Not more than a week had elapsed before he again began to nose around Tommy's room in quest of evidence which should convict him. But Tommy was wide awake, and while seeming not to notice what was going on, he had his bright eyes peeled for everything.

The old goat before referred to was no myth. On the contrary it was a living, breathing reality, as the writer knows from experience, and as dozens of others found out while there at school. He was worse than Buckey, Tommy's pet goat at home, which made so much trouble on that eventful Thanksgiving, as will be remembered.

But Tommy made friends with him, and in a short time could manage him better than anybody else. He even went so far as to learn him one or two tricks, which made much sport for the boys.

Well, one night Tommy caught the goat, and "capturing a head of cabbage, he placed it before him at the head of the stairs, and just outside of his door, tying him with a small string which he could easily break, if needs be.

The boys were all gathered in his room and were enjoying themselves hugely; some were playing cards, others were singing songs, while two or three were telling stories.

The goat had made a satisfactory meal off the cabbage head, and had laid down to chew its end of contentment and to dream of the sports past and gone—perchance to meditate upon fun to come.

He was a very quiet animal, as the writer remembers well. He was noted for being a masked battery (or buttery) and had a faculty of "gitting in" heavily when least expected.

I remember on one occasion while standing in front of my dormitory one night, slightly after hours, talking with a party of jolly spirits, that this goat, without the slightest warning, sent his brainbox into the region of my resting-place with such force as to knock me through a briar hedge without allowing any stoppages for refreshments.

I remember just how it was.

Tommy's room, as before mentioned, was just at the head of the stairs, and the goat lay on the landing, at peace with all the world and everything else.

Old Pike was bound to find out something against Tommy that would insure his expulsion from school, and every night since his unfortunate ducking he had spent in keeping close watch on his room.

On this particular occasion he had seen as many as a dozen students enter this particular dormitory and go to Tommy's room, and he concluded, with much reason, that something wild was going on.

So he stole cautiously up, and creeping softly to the door of Tommy's room, he stooped over to listen at the keyhole, taking particular pains to convince himself that there was no bucket of slops to fall on him from above.

There were sounds of revelry within, and peals of laughter which convinced him that illicit fun was being indulged in.

He was bent over, listening with all his ears (and they were long ones), to learn who were there, when the goat suddenly came to the conclusion that he had something to do.

Suddenly he came to understand what that "something" was. The janitor was in a stooping position, presenting his sitting down portion prominently, when Mr. Goat braced back, gave one tremendous bound, and struck old Pike in the behind.

The effect of that blow was tremendous. It knocked the old fellow down a whole flight of stairs, and breaking the frail string by which he was tied, he followed after, in no graceful style. In fact, they both tumbled heels over head down that flight of stairs, landing at the bottom all in a heap, so that it would have been hard to tell which was goat and which was man, when they landed.

Of course the boys understood what had happened, but they rushed out in great alarm, and ran down to the bottom of the stairs.

There they found the goat busily at work butting the unfortunate janitor, who lay doubled up in the corner like a damaged tea chest. He would give him a bang, and then backing away a few feet, would wait for a movement on the part of Pike, and then when it came he would go for him again, as though determined to bang the stuffing out of him in the shortest possible time.

"Ho! what's the matter here?" asked Tommy, who was the first to reach the landing where the fun was going on.

"The goat! kill him!" shouted several, and they went for that janitor and paid off many an old score.

"Stop him! stop him!" shouted Pike, who was still being driven into a corner by the goat. "Take him away!"

"Oh! oh! we don't dare to!" shouted Tommy Bounce.

"Get the gun and shoot him!" said Dovey, excitedly.

"No! no! you idiots—ough!" he added, as the goat gave him another butt, "you will shoot me."

"No, no, that's all right," replied Tommy. "Bring along the gun."

"You fools! Take away this goat!" shouted Pike.

"We don't dare to—here, Frank, bring the shotgun, quick."

During this time there was the wildest excitement on all sides, shouting by those in the secret, and who wished to keep the thing going, while every student in the building rushed out to see what all the row was about.

Meanwhile the goat was giving it to Pike the worst way. He had knocked him into a corner at the foot of the stairs, and there he was bucking him so rapidly that he had no chance to escape; in fact, every time he attempted to get up the goat was sure to be on hand, ready to knock him back into the corner again.

But when he heard the proposition to bring forth a shot-gun with which to slay a battering ram, poor Pike was frightened half out of his wits, and nerved to a pitch which enabled him to break away.

Gathering himself up with a tremendous effort, and after being knocked down by the goat two or three times more, he made a dive for the front door, and cleared it at a bound, although he slipped, and went sprawling into a mud puddle just before it, followed by the goat, who gave him a parting butt, and then disappeared in the darkness.

At that moment some one of the boys fired a pistol out of the window above, and Pike, thinking they were trying to shoot the goat, and might shoot him, yelled bloody murder, and started as fast as his legs could carry him in the direction of his own habitation.

To say that the boys enjoyed themselves over this comical affair, would be putting it altogether too mildly. They gathered in Tommy's room, and laughed until they were so sore that they could hardly draw a breath.

It was a huge affair, and even before school commenced the next morning, scholars became acquainted with the particulars, and so the laugh went round, until the whole school was in an uproar at the comical adventure of the unpopular janitor.

Of course he was not inclined to put up with it and say nothing. He reported to Professor Taylor that the boys had set the goat upon him, and that he had been sadly bruised and put about in consequence thereof.

But when the boys were brought up before the professor they told a plain, straightforward story

of how it all happened. The goat, they said, had a great habit of coming up and sleeping in the entry, and of attacking everybody who chanced to go near him.

This all looked reasonable enough to the professor, for he also knew how big a rascal the goat was.

But how about the janitor? What was he doing up there?

The only way he could get out of it was, he said he heard a great noise in some of the students' rooms, and was trying to find out which room it proceeded from, when the assault was begun upon him.

Old Professor Taylor, although a strict disciplinarian, and one of the best teachers to be found in the country, had also a vein of humor in his make-up, and the ludicrousness of this affair was too much for his natural gravity. He could not for the life of him keep from laughing, and so poor Pike not only received no sympathy, but was compelled to submit to more laughter over his misfortunes.

At all events, the boys got off scot-free, and the janitor was as far behind in his revenge as ever, besides being so sore that he could hardly walk for the next week.

But that goat was securely fastened up, so as to be out of danger in the future.

These tricks were highly applauded by the scholars, and Tommy Bounce became the most popular boy in school, greatly to the disgust of Janitor Pike and Joe Smith.

Joe had for a long time been the acknowledged leader among the boys, but now he found that he was left in the rear, both as regards fun and fighting, for Tommy had taken the wind out of his sails very suddenly.

But he was not disposed to give up so easily, so he joined with Pike against Tommy, and they put their two wise heads together, resolved to put him down and out of the school.

But Tommy was not down yet.

CHAPTER XI.

A FEW days after the events just related, a fire broke out in one of the dormitory buildings, and of course produced great excitement.

It was a bitter cold day, as the writer well remembers, and as there was only one small hand engine belonging to the institution, fears were entertained that the whole row of buildings would be destroyed.

This engine was always manned by the students, and on this occasion, despite the deep snow on the ground, it was quickly dragged to the scene of burning.

But it was of no use; since the cold was so intense that it froze the old concern up as tight as a drum the moment it took in water.

In this extremity the janitor, Pike, who always took the lead on such occasions, ordered out a line of buckets and got the students to form from the old pump to the burning building. Several of them had already mounted to the roof, where they supported themselves by digging holes in the frozen snow which lay upon it.

Pike stood at the head of the ladder, where he could pass up the buckets of water as they came to him from along the line and were handed up to him, and so he could direct all movements.

The fire was soon found to be in the garret, and was not long in breaking out. Pails of water added to the melted snow on the roof, soon put it out, or at least got it entirely under control.

But when the boys on the roof became aware the danger was over they soon found chance for a little fun.

Our hero, Tommy Bounce, was there, and it only needed a word from him to set the mischief going.

Watching his opportunity, he threw a pail of water all over Pike, at the same time pretending to slip and to do it accidentally.

As before stated, the day was bitter cold, and the water froze on Pike the moment it struck him. He yelled for the boys above to be more careful, but it was only a few moments before another pailful was dashed all over him.

The boys all saw the drift of the fun, and entered into it as only boys can. Pailful after pailful was swashed over the unpopular janitor, he all the while yelling and protesting, while the boys claimed that they could not help it. In fact, several of the fellows below him on the ladder were being made victims of in order to insure Pike the sousing which he was thought to deserve, for a part of the water fell on them in freezing spray.

But in a few moments Pike concluded that he would get out of the reach of these "accidental" swashings, and so he attempted to go down. But his clothes had frozen so stiff that it was found to be impossible for him to move, and he yelled lustily.

"Get a rope!" he cried.

"What for?" asked several.

"Yes, to lower Mr. Pike down. He has frozen so stiff that he cannot move," said Tommy, comprehending the situation and suddenly appearing anxious.

The supply of water by this time had ceased, for Pike could no longer hand it up; so they all threw their buckets to the ground, and began to manifest the greatest interest in the welfare of the janitor.

A rope was soon obtained and thrown to those on the roof, while, with the assistance of a boy be-

low him, they fastened one end of it around Pike's body and prepared to lower him to the ground.

"Oh, oh! be careful, won't you, boys!" pleaded the shivering wretch.

"Oh, yes, never fear, we'll let you down all safe enough," replied several.

"I—T—Tommy Bounce, be careful now, there's a good boy," he said as he saw our hero firmly braced with the rope in his hand.

"Oh, honest Injun, Mr. Pike, I'll be careful."

"All ready. Slide along down the ladder, and we will break your fall," said Dovey, who also had a hold upon the rope.

In the meantime there was the greatest excitement among those below. Professor Taylor and the majority of the Faculty were there, and finding that the fire was out, they were all doing what they could to relieve the janitor and those upon the icy roof. Several large pails of hot coffee were being handed around among the students, and everything was being done to reward their bravery.

"Now be careful, my heroes!" shouted Mr. Taylor, as Pike prepared to be let down.

"Yes, sir," was the response.

Clinging around the outside edges of the ladder as well as he could with his frozen clothes, both with his arms and legs, Pike gave the signal, and they began to lower him.

"Oh!" he grunted, as they allowed him to go a few feet and then suddenly brought him to a halt.

"Careful, boys," yelled Mr. Taylor.

"Yes, sir."

But when they had lowered him to within about ten feet of the ground they let him go, and down he went, all in a heap, while those on the roof protested that they could not help it, and prepared cautiously to follow.

The moment he landed the boys gathered around him.

"He's freezing!" some shouted.

"Yes; rub him in snow," said Mr. Taylor.

"Yes, yes; rub him in snow!"

The boys needed no other invitation, for seeing a chance to pay off an old score while obeying the professor's orders, they each flew at poor Pike, rubbed his face and head in snow, kicked it in his face, kicked him not a few times, just to set his blood into circulation—in fact, almost buried him in the snow, so anxious did each one seem to save his life.

But the Professor saw what they were up to, and pushing them aside, assisted the janitor to his feet.

"Hold on, I say, you display altogether too much zeal," said he.

"But he might freeze," said Tommy Bounce, who stood by with a large lump of snow and apparently anxious to give him the benefit of it.

"No, no, he is all right now," said the Professor, at which the boys set up a cheer, to make their actions seem more like genuine friendship and interest.

What Professor Taylor had said was true. The rubbing, kicking, and snowing that he had received at the hands of the boys had put him into such a state of excitement that he was out of danger.

The Professor and another teacher took him, one by each arm, and started with him for his home, urging him into a run, for fear he might freeze again.

This had the desired effect, and the boys remained behind to laugh over the comical affair and to conclude that they were pretty well even with the old fellow now.

Professor Taylor soon returned, and informed the boys that on account of the bravery and interest they had shown they were to have the remainder of the day as a holiday. In addition to this, he complimented several of the boys in person, among whom was our friend Tommy Bounce, who had certainly manifested much bravery, but who really was at the bottom of the mischief that had resulted so disastrously to Pike.

And right merrily did they spend that holiday which they had earned—some of them on the old meadow skating-pond up by the little red schoolhouse, and others on the hill leading down to the village, where there was a coast about a mile in length, over which they could slide on their sleds with delightful rapidity.

But poor Pike!—his reflections while being thawed out, and afterwards, may possibly be imagined. He felt as sure as could be, that the boys had put him through this freezing course of sprouts for the purpose of getting even with him for what he had done to them, but as they had acted otherwise so bravely, and had been complimented by the professor and the Faculty, he felt that any attempt on his part to get them punished, or even under the ban of suspicion, would be fruitless.

So he was obliged to smother his wrath, and wait for some future act by which he could get revenge. But it was a bitter pill to swallow, especially as he saw the boys laughing a long time after the occurrence at his discomfiture.

But time flew on. Winter was past, and beautiful spring once more wreathed her smiles over the face of the earth.

Nothing of importance happened in the meantime, and beyond a natural aptitude for all kinds of deviltry, Tommy Bounce got along with his teachers quite as well as any of the boys.

But it may as well be stated that Mr. Pike had grown cautious about nosing around the room of Tommy, and in many ways he treated him with much consideration.

With the spring, the old goat was once more at liberty to roam abroad, and once more he and Tommy became good friends, and under his tutorage he soon learned tricks enough to make him of much interest and amusement to the boys.

One morning the janitor went as usual to ring the bell for prayers, an exercise that the scholars took but little interest in, by the way, and that old bell gave forth no sound.

But Pike could scarcely hear whether it did or not, being on the inside of the building and somewhat deaf besides, and so after doing his duty, as he supposed, he went home to get his breakfast and to brace up for the cares and labors of the day.

Not hearing the bell, of course neither the students or the teachers came to time, and so the hour wore away between the bell for prayers and the regular school bell.

A few scholars were standing around at some distance as the janitor went into the building to ring the bell again, but he did not know who they were and gave it no thought.

Again he pulled the rope in the usual way; but, as before, the bell gave forth no sound. The boys were gathered and a smothered laugh was being indulged in by them.

"Wonder why the old man don't ring the bell?" asked Tommy Bounce with mock seriousness.

"Guess he's fell asleep," replied Frank Sanborn.

"Perhaps he's doing it easy so as not to waken Prexy," put in Dovey.

"Let's scatter and see how it ends. But, mum's the word you know," said Tommy.

"All right," said they, scattering in different directions.

By the time they reached the door of the academy there were several students there comparing watches and trying to solve the mystery of hearing no bell.

Presently Professor Taylor came over from his house, holding his watch in his hand, looking wildly over his spectacles and wondering what the trouble was.

At that moment Pike had finished ringing the bell, as he supposed, and threw open the outer doors for the students to enter. The professor met him on the threshold.

"What is the matter, Mr. Pike, why have you rung, no bells this morning?"

"Sir, I don't understand you," said Pike.

"Neither do I understand you, sir. It is now nine o'clock, and I have heard no bells, either for prayers or school."

"You might have been asleep when the first bell rung, but I have just finished ringing the bell for school."

The boys gathered around curiously.

"No, sir, I never sleep later than five o'clock. I guess you are the one asleep, sir," replied the professor, warmly.

"I can't understand it, sir."

"Did any of you hear the bell?" asked the old professor, turning to the students.

"No, sir," was the general reply.

"And there has been no bell rung, Mr. Pike. I trust you will not forget yourself," said he, turning and leading the way into the school-room.

Pike was nettled, and went away pouting, to attend to his duties elsewhere. "Ring yer durned old bell yourself then," muttered he.

Not above half of the scholars had arrived and only one of the teachers. Mr. Taylor called school to order, and then went out into the entry resolved to ring the bell for those not there.

The old gentleman did not possess the best hearing in the world, and the bell was not a large one. So he pulled away at the rope very savagely for a few minutes, and then, supposing he had given the necessary warning, he returned to the school-room and opened the exercises with his usual prayer.

But the students and teachers by this time had become aware of the fact that something was wrong with the bell, and also that it was school time. So when the long prayer was over they filed into the school-room and said nothing about the absence of the usual warning by bell.

Mr. Eaton, however (one of the teachers), asked the old professor why no bell was rung for prayers or school.

"Oh, Mr. Pike got asleep I guess. But I'll attend to his case after this," he replied, and the business of the day was begun.

Tommy and a few of the fellows wore looks of a very suspicious nature and could scarcely keep their faces straight long enough to recite their lessons.

But the forenoon passed without any further incident, and school was dismissed for the regular "morning." The boys enjoyed it with more than usual zest, especially those of them that were in the dumb secret, although they all knew that something was wrong.

When one o'clock came, Mr. Pike, who had got over his pout a bit, again seized that bell-rope and began to pull it as though determined that every body in the town should hear it that time.

But, as before, it gave out no sound, although he was not aware of it. He only knew that the old bell was still swinging in the high tower and that he felt savage enough to pull its tongue out by the roots.

Professor Taylor had his ears open, and when the time for first bell came and he did not hear it, he marched over to see what the trouble was. There he found Pike pulling away at the rope as though anxious to pull the whole concern down through the belfry.



"Here's the goat, boys, give it to him," shouted Tommy, as he led the van and hit the janitor a tremendous bang with a pillow.

"Why don't you ring the bell, sir?" he demanded sharply.

"Ring thunder!" growled Pike, giving it another pull, "What am I doing?"

"Sir, you ask me too much, but you are not ringing the bell, that's certain."

"Mr. Taylor, if any one else should tell me that, I should call them a blooming idiot."

"Be careful, sir!"

"What is the matter, professor. I don't understand you."

"The bell, sir, the bell!"

"What of it, sir?"

"It does not ring, sir."

"Not ring? Is the old man crazy?" he cried, to himself.

By this time Tommy and a dozen or so of his friends were gathered around.

"Boys, don't that bell ring?" asked Pike.

"No, nary ring," was the reply.

"No, sir, and it did not ring this morning, at least not until I rang it."

During this conversation the janitor had stopped pulling the bell and stood in deep perplexity.

Finally he gave the bell another pull.

"Do you hear that?" he asked.

"No."

"Then something must be the matter with it," said he.

"Yes, let us go up and see," said Mr. Taylor.

Unlocking the door which led to the belfry the janitor led the way, followed by his superior, Tommy and a few others.

It was a long tramp up several flights of dusty stairs, but Pike brushed away the most of the cobwebs as he puffed and grunted up in his clumsy way.

Arriving at last in the bell tower, they found a large bundle of rags tied securely around the tongue or clapper of the bell in such a way as to prevent its giving forth any sound at all, or at best only a dull sound that could not be heard a rod away.

"There!" exclaimed Pike, pointing to the muffled bell.

Professor Taylor was completely astonished, while the boys crept up, and with well feigned ignorance manifested their surprise.

"That explains all," said Pike.

"But what explains this?" demanded Taylor. Pike glanced around at the boys as though he would read the guilty knowledge in some of their faces. But there were only three of them who did know anything about it, and they kept their faces noble.

"Some one has been up here."

"That is very evident."

"But who?"

"That is not so evident. But you should know something about it, Mr. Pike; you alone are supposed to have custody of the key."

"So I have; but it must be that some of the boys have another one."

"Boys, do either of you know about this?" asked the professor, pointing seriously to the bell.

They all protested their ignorance.

"Cut it loose, Pike, and I will take it upon myself to find out the author of this piece of mischief, and when he is discovered he will be instantly expelled from the school."

This appeared to satisfy the janitor, who went to work cutting the muffling away, and all the while hoping that Tommy Bounce was the culprit, and that he should have the extreme pleasure of proving it against him.

He took the muffling down with him, and then proceeded to ring the bell, which now gave forth its old familiar sound.

Pike examined the rags carefully after school had begun, hoping by them to find out some clue to the boy who perpetrated the joke. He took Joe Smith into his confidence, and they both put their heads together for the purpose of finding the guilty party.

Among other articles of old rags with which the bell had been muffled was a cast-off shirt which had belonged to some of the scholars; but there was no mark on it that would lead to any conclusion regarding who its owner had been.

But Joe Smith, who still hated Tommy Bounce, and would like to have him expelled quite as well as Pike would, saw a way to bring it about, he thought.

"Have you got any indelible ink?" he asked.

"Yes, there is some up to the laundry. Why?"

"Suppose the name of Thomas Bounce could be found on this old shirt?" whispered Joe.

"Good, by jingo! I'll get it and you write it, eh?" asked the janitor, excitedly.

"All right; I'll do it."

In a day or two after the job was all completed and well put up.

"Now, lay the thing away for a day or two until it gets dry, so that it will not look quite so fresh," suggested Joe.

"All right; I'll fix that."

With this arrangement they separated, and with the understanding that Joe Smith should not be known in the case at all.

That evening Pike informed Professor Taylor that he had discovered the culprit.

"Who is he?"

"Who but that spirit of mischief, Thomas Bounce?" replied Pike.

"Are you sure of it?"

"I will bring you conclusive proofs in the morning."

"Very well. Then I will act upon the case."

Mr. Janitor Pike was now delighted. At last he had found a sure way of getting rid of his tormentor. Tommy Bounce would be no longer a member of that school.

But there is many a slip between the flowing cup and the eager lip, as this case proved, to the confusion of the conspirators.

Pike had placed the prepared shirt in his woodshed to dry and to mellow, if possible, so that the freshness of their conspiracy could not be seen so easily, and on the very morning that he was to place it as evidence before the professor the old goat happened to be smelling around for an early breakfast, and came upon this identical shirt.

Now, if there is anything in this world that a goat relishes better than another, it is an old cast-off shirt. They will eat any such thing in preference to green fodder, partly, I have often thought, because they imagine that they are doing a certain amount of mischief as well as getting a long chew.

Well, that goat stood there for an hour shaking its stubby tail and chewing that old shirt. The only way there is to tell whether a goat is happy or not is by the rapidity and earnestness with which he wags his tail, and this goat on this occasion seemed to be very happy indeed.

At all events, after having eaten the garment, it trotted slowly away to get his dessert in the shape of some tender grass, taking with him in the shape of pulp the evidence which had been prepared against our hero.

Pike had entered the shed just in time to see the last end of the garment gobbled into Mr. Goat's mouth, and he was mad enough to stand on his head and fight all the goats in the town of Andover.

But this goat had an unhealthy way of turning on people and of jumping into their bread-baskets, and Pike had to get all the consolation he could out of a hard swear.

He told the professor the particulars that he pretended to have discovered, and the fate of his evidence.

Tommy was summoned into the professor's presence and accused of the trick, which he of course denied all knowledge of, and demanded proof.

Pike rehearsed the evidence found on the old shirt and its fate with the goat.

"It is false, sir. I brought only six shirts with me,

and they are all new and my name is not on them, but my number is, as I can readily prove."

"You saw the name, did you, Mr. Pike?" asked the professor.

"I did."

"And did any one else see it?"

"Yes, sir; Joseph Smith."

"I deny it," said Tommy, indignantly.

"Let Smith be called in," said Mr. Taylor.

In a few moments he entered the room, looking guilty and confused.

"Smith, did Mr. Pike show you an old garment which he took from the bell above?"

"He did, sir."

"The garment has been, unfortunately, eaten by a goat; but did he call your attention to any name on the shirt?"

"He did, sir."

"What was the name?"

"Thomas Bounce," said Joe, sharply, at the same time darting a look of hatred at Tommy.

"You are ready to swear, are you, that you saw the name of Thomas Bounce on the shirt?"

"I am, sir."

"And I am ready to swear that I saw Joe Smith write it on the old rag," said Frank Sanborn, coming into the room.

Smith and Pike turned pale and showed much confusion.

"What do you mean, young man?" asked the professor, as soon as he recovered from his surprise.

"Only this, sir. I overheard a conversation between Pike and Smith to write the name of Tommy Bounce on the old shirt in order to get him expelled from school, as they both hate him."

Excitement ran high. Both of the guilty parties denied it; but as young Sanborn bore a good reputation for truth, Mr. Taylor was inclined to believe him, and so dismissed the case, with a promise to look into the conspiracy still further and deal exact justice.

"Frank, you and the old goat have proved the best friends I ever had," said Tommy, grasping young Sanborn by the hand. "Just you wait a bit and see if I don't make it warm for these fellows."

"Count on me for a friend, Tommy."

"So I will."

Pike overheard this agreement in his confusion, but he was too much interested in his own case to think of much else.

CHAPTER XII.

AFFAIRS with our friend Tommy Bounce at school at Andover went along smoothly enough, and although much mischief had been done that could not be accounted for, still he remained in favor with the teachers, and continued to be regarded as a first-rate fellow and the leader of the wild ones.

As for Mr. Pike, the janitor, he had long since come to regard him as incorrigible, and so bothered his head but little regarding him, further than keeping a casual eye upon him in the hope of catching him at something that would cause his expulsion from school.

His last attempt, in connection with Joe Smith, had signally failed, and both of the conspirators had narrowly escaped being turned away from the institution where one of them got his bread and the other was preparing to get his butter.

After they both gave it up as a bad job, and were careful how they crossed our hero's path, although continually on the look out for games which they felt sure would be played upon them for what they had done.

In truth they had good reason for doing so, and in spite of their watchfulness they suffered once or twice from Tommy's practical jokes, and as usual had the whole school laughing at them.

But the mystery attending the muffling of the academy bell, as spoken of in the last chapter, remained a mystery, and indeed, I doubt if the faculty ever knew until now—if any of them are alive to know it—who the authors of the mischief were.

Tommy in the meantime was writing home to his parents every week, keeping them feeling first-rate with the accounts of how well he was getting along, which he really did, in spite of the mischief and devilry within him, showing evidence of improvement.

"Tommy will make a great man yet," said his father one day, after reading one of his letters aloud to the family.

"I don't know about that, Josiah. It allus did seem to me that he had too much mischief in him to learn anything else," replied his mother.

"No, no, Maria; most all boys at his age are full of the old white horse. I was some that way myself," he added in an undertone so that Jakey and the others should not hear him.

"Oh, I dare say; you know I allus said that he was a chip off the old block."

This put the matter to rest, for Josiah did not care to argue the point in which he was sure to get beaten by his wife.

As for Jakey, as his mother had always said, when once removed from the influence of Tommy, he would be a better boy. He was plodding along at the village school, giving every promise of becoming a sober man, and of settling down into his father's humdrum life.

But let us return to Tommy.

Some time after the joke of muffling the bell so that it would not ring, Tommy and his room-mate,

George Dovey, played a trick on a couple of people in Andover, which is also about to receive for the first time the light of print, for although the trick was generally understood, the authors of it, I am sure, have never been known to this day.

A short distance out of the limits of the academy belongings stood a row of little frame houses, the first floors of which were intended for stores, while the upper portions were intended to be rented as dwellings.

The entire block stood empty for some time after being finished, but at length, and at about the same time, the two adjoining stores nearest to Main Street were hired, one by a negro shoemaker, and the other by an Irish tailor.

Over the door of each they put up signs of about the same size, and general colors, and for a long time the two men got along very well together as neighbors, one speaking a good word for the other on all occasions, and seemingly they were anxious for each other's success.

They both obtained all the work they could do from the students, repairing and making, for they were very good at their respective trades, and gave general satisfaction, and credit, a very valuable thing to most scholars.

And so the persons, the shops, and the signs of

"P. McFADDEN, Draper and Tailor,"

AND

"THOMAS JEFFERSON SMITH, Boot and Shoemaker," became as well known to the boys as their own teachers and recitation-rooms.

Patrick McFadden was a red-headed, fiery son of old Ireland, quick as a flash, but also quick to forget and forgive.

He had a pretty daughter Mollie, and as she was quite old enough to flirt and quite mischievous enough to enjoy it, she was not long in making herself the center of many admiring eyes, although she gave her father much anxiety and trouble thereby.

Thomas Jefferson Smith was a widower without children or relatives of any kind, and a jollier soul never hammered or pegged a sole than he was.

He was a great favorite with the boys, a thorough darkey, full of stories and comic sayings, but, to tell the truth, the boys used to play many a joke upon him which would have soured almost any one else but black Thomas Jefferson Smith.

And, in fact, both he and McFadden came in for such little attentions much oftener than they wished to, and had they not depended upon the scholars so much for employment, they would have long before declared open war on them.

But Tommy was the especial pet of both of them. They found him not only a good customer himself but whenever a new scholar came, he was sure to bring him to their shops.

He would do all this for them, and while exercising his generosity, would play a trick of some kind on one or the other of them without either of them mistrusting him.

But one or two of his pranks had made trouble between the tailor and shoemaker, and in a short time the two neighbors who had all along been such good friends now became enemies and ready to punch each others' heads.

This state of affairs the boys all enjoyed hugely, and not one of them took any pains, you may well believe, to heal the misunderstanding between them.

On the contrary they would tell McFadden what Smith had insinuated, regarding his probity as a man and tailor, while they told Smith that McFadden regarded him as the poorest cobbler that he had ever seen.

"Begob, but I'll bate that nager to a jelly, so I will," Mr. McFadden would say, when he had heard what his sable neighbor was supposed to have said regarding him.

"Now, for sure, boys, I'se not gwine for terstan' dat Irisher's blarney any moah. I'll butt de bread-basket out o' him, suah, mine what I'm tellin' on you," was the way Smith would express himself under similar circumstances, although in both cases it was more bark than bite.

One night, about this time, Tommy and his chum were passing the shops. Both of them were asleep, and the buildings were darkened in every direction.

"I say, Dovey," said Tommy, "let's play a game on McFadden and Smith."

"How? What?"

"Let's change their signs."

"Yes, by jingo!" exclaimed Dovey, slapping his fists together.

"And some fun will come of it, I'll bet."

"Lots of it; but how can we do it?"

"Let me think," said Tommy, drawing nearer.

"Hush! Do you see that wash bench? Well, let's bring that along here by the door and I guess we can reach them."

In a few minutes this was done, and finding that they could reach them without any trouble, Tommy mounted it to see if he could unfasten the signs.

But in order to do this he would be obliged to have a screw-driver. So the job was abandoned until the next night, when, with the proper tools, they succeeded in placing McFadden's sign over Smith's door, and Smith's over that of tailor McFadden's.

However, they looked so much alike that a casual observer would never have thought of any change, and so when morning came the two men opened

their respective shops and commenced the business of the day without so much as a thought of anything being wrong.

Thomas Jefferson Smith sat down upon his little old bench and began hammering away, and singing as usual:

"Old man, old man, what yer doin' dar?"
"Settin' in de parlor straight'ning out my hair?"
Right from de railroad, rig-a-jig-a-jig,
Johnny cotch yer playin' on de banjo."

Then McFadden would growl awhile:

"Did anybody iver hear the loikes o' that far singin'? Begorra, but my mother onct had a sick pig that could bate that nager singin', so he could."

But he would soon forget his wrath and commence himself on something like this:

"In good King Arthur's time,
A man had bad sons four,
But three out of four
We turned out of door,
Because they would not sing,
Because they would not sing,
Because they would not sing;
Three out of the four were turned out of door,
Because they would not sing."

Oh, one of them was a weaver,
And one of them was a weaver,
And one of them was a little tailor,
Three jolly rogues together.

Chorus.—Because they, &c.

But the weaver he stole yarn,
And the miller he stole corn,
And the little tailor he stole broadcloth
To keep those three rogues warm.

Chorus.—Because they, &c.

But the miller was drowned in his dam,
The weaver was hung in his yarn,
And the devil ran away with the little tailor
With the broadcloth under his arm."

Chorus.—Because they, &c.

The last verse was always sure to make the shoemaker laugh.

"Yah! Yah! Yah! Dat's what de debbel am a gwine to do wid all de tailors," he would shout loud enough for McFadden to hear.

"Out, ye nager," was all the reply he would get. But Smith would have his laugh out, and most likely forget himself in another song after awhile, still hammering away as McFadden was sewing or pressing away at his work.

About noon one of the students, who had been there only a short time, and who had been put up to the job, entered McFadden's shop.

"Good day, sir," said Mac, getting down from his table, where he had been sitting cross-legged.

"Good day, sir. Are those shoes done?"

"Shoes? Do ye take me for a cobbler; a nagur?" "Why, you are the shoemaker that I left my shoes with, are you not?" asked the young man, looking all innocence.

"Well, I only judged by the sign over your door," said he.

"Go 'way wid ye, an' be awsy wid yer foolin'. Sure, it's the next door ye mane. Can't ye tell a tailor's sign from a shoemaker's?" Saying which, he got up and sat down to his work again, while the young man withdrew.

A few minutes afterwards Smith's shop door was opened by the same student.

"Got that coat done yet?" he asked.

The shoemaker looked at him a moment, and then pointing over his shoulder towards McFadden's place of business he began humming away and singing:

"Right from the railroad rig-a-jig-a-jig,
Johnny cotch yer playin' on de banjo."

"What! isn't this a tailor's shop?"

"No, sah, it am an' understandin' shop."

"A what?"

"Shop for de makin' an' reparin' ob soles; whar you can awl—ways put yer foot in it, an' get a good welting at last," replied Smith, without looking up to see how the joke took.

"Well, that gets the upper-hand of me."

"Den yer can peg out, boss."

"But I want my coat, sir."

"Go an' get it for all I care."

"But I left it with you."

"Guess not, boss—mus' hab left it wid dat bogtrotter in de next door."

"But I only judged that this was a tailor shop by the sign over your door."

"Go 'long!" said he, as the youth went soberly out.

"Dat chap hab had some hard cider, suah. Don't know a shoemaker's sign from a tailor's!" And he laughed heartily to himself over the idea.

It wasn't more than two minutes afterwards before another honest-looking student entered the tailor's shop.

"What will you charge me to make a pair of easy boots?" he said.



"There!" exclaimed Pike, pointing to the muffled bell, "that explains all."

"Not much, if ye'll let me skin ye first!" replied McFadden, fiercely.

"Sir!"

"Go 'way, now, wid yer jokin'! It's a dacint man I am! an' be the powers! I'll lave the mark of me hot goose on the next man that takes me for a nagur, so I will!"

"But I judged by the sign over your door that this was a shoemaker's shop."

Out wid ye, ye drunken spalpeen! Can't ye rade better nor that? Faith, I think the professors should have an eye on ye young men—so I do!"

"Well, all right. If you don't want to make me a pair of boots, I'll find some one who does. I'll go into the shop next door, and get a pair of pants made, and see if he is as rude as you are," said he, going from the place.

"Bad luck to me and me goose! but it's bad the way the boys are goin' on at this academy, gettin' so drunk they can't read signs straight," he muttered, resuming his work.

Presently the same youth entered Smith's shop.

"Good day, sir; I was just in the shoemaker's shop and was roundly abused for offering him a job. So I thought I'd come in here and get you to make me a pair of pantaloons."

"Wha' am dat you say?" demanded Smith, seizing his hammer.

"I want you to make me a pair of pants."

"Am you a student?"

"Oh, yes."

"An' you can read?"

"To be sure."

"Den when you see a shoemaker's sign, wha' make you go in dar for pants?"

"I don't understand you, sir. I am almost a stranger in Andover, and seeing your sign?"

"Go right 'way from heah, honey, or I shall spile yer wid somelin'!"

"Sir! Are you also crazy?"

"Don't fool wid me—I'se bad, bad man ter fool wid, you better b'live."

"But I—"

"Git!" yelled Smith, motioning as though to throw the hammer at him.

And he got.

"By golly, I b'lieve dat bogtrotter am a puttin' up dis yer job on me," he mused.

"Fat the devil is the matter wid all the boys the day I wonder," mused McFadden, who was still brooding over his part of the affair, without knowing what trouble his neighbor was having. "I wonder if that nagur isn't a gittin' the boys to play these pranks on me. If I thought he was I'd make him ride a hot goose, so I would."

"Better stop dat foolin' in dar, Mr. Tailorman," yelled Smith.

"Begorry an' if I catch ye sendin' any more students in here for cobblin', be jabbers, but I'll come in ter ye, so I will," retorted McFadden loudly.

"Go 'long, Irisher!"

"Go 'long Nagurer!"

At that moment Smith's door opened and a stranger entered.

"Is this No. 9?" he asked.

"Yes, sah, it am."

"Well, here is a letter for Patrick McFadden," said the man, producing it.

"He don't lib hea; he lives next door," yelled Smith.

"But it says on the sign"—

"Git out ob heah, I tol ye!" and seeing that he meant trouble, the man backed out and attempted to go into McFadden's.

"Be out o' this, ye blackguard!" yelled Mac.

"No more of yer jokes here. Out!"

The man evidently concluded that both men were crazy, and so hastily made off without delivering his letter.

"The bloody nagur," he muttered, firmly believing by this time that the shoemaker was responsible for all his annoyances.

During the next hour they were left unmolested, and each appeared to be forgetting their troubles; but presently another student dawned upon Smith.

"Got that coat mended?"

"Go 'long wid yer foolin'."

"What fooling? Didn't I leave a coat here last week to be repaired?"

"No, dis yer am a shoemaker's shop; don't yer see nuffin'?"

"But your sign reads"—

"Git right out ob heah, young man, or I shall make somebody's monkey sick. Go."

The student vanished, and, at the same time, another one called on McFadden and inquired if he had got his boots half-soled.

Mac chased him out of the door with his hissing hot goose, and then, going into Smith's place, he said:

"Mr. Smith, ye contemptible shoemaking nagur, if yer dare ter send ony more of them students inter my shop for cobblin' jobs, I'll burn yer wid this goose so ye'll have to stand up at yer work for the next month."

"Go right out o' heah, yer bogtrotter!" said Smith, seizing his awl and rushing towards him.

McFadden retreated hastily to his own shop, followed by the enraged darkey.

"Mine what I tell ye, now; if yousen' any moah

ob dem debblish boys inter my shop for tailor work I'll harm ye."

"Git out you nagur!"

"Get in, yer bogtrotter, yerninth part of a man!"

"Bad luck to ye for a blackguard. Take that," said McFadden, going up behind him as he turned to go, and placing his hot goose upon the lower back of the darkey.

"Oh! oh! murder!" shouted Smith, rushing out, followed by the now victorious tailor.

But no sooner had he entered the shop of the cobbler than he in turn set upon him with his awl and cleared him out, howling with pain.

This appeared to satisfy each of them for the time being, and so they both went sullenly to work again.

But every now and then some of the boys would rush in to torment them, and finally each resolved to take the law on the other.

"Begorra, if there's any law in the land I'll have it," said McFadden, throwing down his work, and going from his shop.

"I'll jis' go right down town and hab dat yer bogtrotter taken up for bodderlin' me," and he threw down his apron and tools and started on the same errand.

By this time Tommy and his friends had got out of school, and learning how matters stood, they resolved to carry the joke still further, in their absence.

One of the fellows, who was very sweet on Mollie, managed to get her out for a ride during her father's absence, and saw the coast was clear.

Half a dozen willing hands were ready for the fun, and in less than half an hour the bench and shoemaker's tools were taken from Smith's shop, and placed in McFadden's, and nearly everything belonging to the tailor's shop was put in Smith's place.

Then they closed the doors and waited results, secreted in an old house just across the way.

Both Smith and McFadden liked a drop to drink, and after getting down into the village the first thing they did was to go to a tavern and take two or three good horns apiece.

This worked them into a better feeling, and each concluded to return without serving out any law to the other.

Mr. McFadden was the first to arrive, and going into his shop he threw aside his coat and hurriedly began to prepare for work.

"Bejabers, but I think the whisky's got into my head," said he, scratching it and looking around in a bewildered sort of way.

Just then Smith returned, but thinking that he

had made the same mistake as his neighbor had said:

"Golly, but dat war mighty powerful gin dat I drink. Don't know my own shop. Yahi yahi yahi! If dat yer Irisher finds me heah he'll swear I am stealin'."

"What'll the nager say if he finds me in his bloody ould cobble shop?"

They both started at the same time to go to what they supposed to be their own shops, and meeting each other, they ran savagely abump, so anxious were they to get into their right quarters.

Then they both went out into the street to take a look at the surroundings, and evidently for the purpose of getting their bearings.

"P. MCFADDEN, DRAPER AND TAILOR," read the Irishman, glancing at his sign over Smith's door.

"THOMAS JEFFERSON SMITH, BOOT AND SHOEMAKER," read Smith, also reading his displaced sign.

"Dat seems for ter be all right," he mused, "but somehow it's turned round mighty queer."

"Faix, it must be the whisky I drank," said McFadden, also returning.

The liquor they had both drank and the general confusion so mixed them up that they both concluded to lay down for a sleep, hoping that matters would seem a little straighter when they woke again.

So they both slept soundly for an hour or two, during which Tommy and his friends again took down the signs and replaced them as they were originally, then waited again for the result.

Presently both of the men awoke, and found the mix as curious as ever; and to make it even worse, Tommy and several of the others who were well-known to them, took turns at calling upon them.

"Hello, Smith," said our hero, entering the shop, which looked somewhat confused; "why, what is the matter?"

"Cuss me, if I know," he growled.

"Why, when did you and McFadden change shops?" he added, looking around.

"What you mean, Tommy?" asked Smith, looking around confusedly.

"Why, this is the tailor shop. How came you in here?"

Dovey had in the meantime been interviewing McFadden.

"What have you been changing shops with Smith for?"

"My boy, I'm bothered entirely, but what is it ye mean entirely?"

"Why, this is Smith's cobbler shop."

"I'll bet ye a new coat it isn't," said he, firmly.

"Done. Come outside."

Taking him out into the street, he pointed to the replaced signs.

"How about that?"

Tommy Bounce came out at about the same time with Smith and asked him how he reconciled himself to the change.

"Boys, I—I gibs it up," said he, shaking his head. "I do go for ter believe dat de debble hab a been a foolin' round heah all day long."

"What do you say, McFadden?" asked several of the boys gathered around.

"Bejabers, but I think the whole place has been bewitched, so I do," said he, mournfully.

"No; I understand it," said one of the boys; "you have both been drinking."

"Yes, you have both been drunk," said another.

"And while in that condition you have changed shops," said Tommy.

They knew they were guilty to a certain extent, and the boys had little difficulty in making them believe that the whole transaction had taken place while they were under the influence of the ardent, and that they had moved the things themselves.

"Begorra, but whisky never made such a fool of me before," said McFadden, scratching behind his ear.

"Must be mighty powerful gin, dat's all I got ter say," put in Smith, who wore a mournful grin.

"Now sign the pledge, or we'll never patronize you again," said Tommy, at which they all cried:

"Yes."

"Begob, I'm wilin'," said the tailor.

"So'm I, boys," said Smith.

The upshot of it was that both men signed the pledge, and became good friends and citizens, and for ought I know they are working side by side to this day.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE last scrape which our friend and hero, Tommy Bounce, got into, it will be remembered, was with, and at the expense of the Irish tailor and the negro shoemaker.

The next one happened only a short time afterwards, and this was the occasion of it.

It was the end of the term at the academy, what is called "commencement" or examinations, and such occasions are always made a great deal of at school, and especially was this the case at Andover.

There always came a crowd of visitors, parents and friends of the scholars, and friends of the school and others. It was a great day for the boys, especially for those who were not going to graduate, although many of those would have been glad to get away if they could have escaped the trouble of the hard study it required to do so.

This was Tommy's first term there, it will be remembered, and as he was going home for the week during which the school remained closed before the

new term began, he was in high spirits and full of mischief.

On this occasion there were twenty or thirty parties who came in all sorts of odd and old-fashioned vehicles, friends of the students or the school, who resided within a few miles of the town.

Tommy and his chum, George Dovey, had lots of fun laughing at these comical turnouts and the solemn old nags that drew them, and they resolved to have some sport with them while the owners were attending the exercises of the examinations, as they themselves would have but little part in it, and would be dismissed early.

Not a great way from the academy building there was a long horse shed, built expressly to accommodate with shelter the horses belonging to visitors, and now it was full.

Tommy and Dovey were let out early, and the whole interest centered in the doings of the higher classes, just exactly as they wanted it to, for they saw fun enough ahead for them.

Going to the shed, Tommy selected a large old-fashioned chaise, one that Noah might have rode in, attached to which was an old yellow horse, fat, lazy, and half asleep. It was one of the most comical-looking turnouts that was ever seen.

"This is good enough for me," said he, "Now we'll see how much speed the old nag has got in him," he added.

"And here is one for me," said Dovey, going to another huge box wagon of age, and innocent of anything but mud—it was, in fact, a farmer's wagon, one that did service on the farm, and was also used for visiting.

The horse was rough, bony, and evidently a friend to standing as long as possible in one place.

"I wonder if there's two-forty in this nag?" he asked, backing the horse out of the shed.

"Two hours and forty minutes to the mile, I guess," replied Tommy, backing his horse out.

"Back, Dobbin, back."

"Back, old shaving-soap!" roared Dovey.

"Shaving-soap! I should rather call him clothes-horse," said Tommy, laughing.

"He's just about as fat as one, that's a fact—

whoa, Goliah! whoa!"

"Now, then, for a dash."

"Behind, not over, the dasher."

"Yes, come on," said Tommy, leaping into his old one-horse chaise.

Dovey followed his example, and was soon seated in his old go-cart.

Tommy led the way down a back road to the village, followed by his chum. But they found their animals better adapted for walking than trotting, and the prospect for much fun was not so bright as it might have been.

"By jingoes, but we've got to work our passage with these nags," said Dovey.

"Let's give them some long oats," replied Tommy, laying the whip on smartly.

"Oh, I guess they are both waiting for that kind of a lunch," replied Dovey, tickling the ribs of his rickety old nag with the business end of a gad.

In this way they succeeded in worrying the horses into a respectable trot, and away they went laughing and shouting down the road.

Arriving in the village, they found two more of their friends, boys as full of fun and as ready for a scrape as they were, and taking them in they began to race up and down the main street, astonishing everybody, the horses included. In fact, they were more astonished than any one else, for never before in their long lives had they been in such hands as they were now in.

"Two to one on old Marrow Bones!" yelled one.

"Five to one on old Pot Belly," said Tommy, shouting back, and again feeding his nag with some more "long oats."

"Hi! hi! G' lang?"

"Hi! hi! Go it! go it!"

The whole party yelled like so many Piute Indians, and created a first-class sensation, after which they rode back to the sheds again, well satisfied with their sport.

"Now, fellows, let us play a joke on the whole party," suggested Tommy.

"Have we time?"

"Yes, exercises won't be over for an hour yet," said another.

"That's so, I guess."

"I know it is. Last year it was sundown before they got through."

"Well, all right. Now, let's shift the wheels of these carriages; change harness, change horses, and mix things up lively," said Tommy.

"Good enough!"

"Yes, yes!"

"Come on."

Tommy's suggestions were carried out to the letter. Several of the horses were taken out of their carriages and put in others; harnesses were taken apart, and a portion swapped with some others; seats were exchanged, and the most possible mix up made that could be thought of.

Then they took one of the great wheels off the old chaise which Tommy had been riding in and changed it with one of the smaller ones belonging to the box-wagon in which Dovey had ridden, and the effect was comical enough to make the horses laugh.

Then they took other four-wheeled carriages and changed the hind for the forward wheels, and did all the other mischief they could think of, after which they withdrew behind a hedge that grew on the other side of the road.

Here, completely out of sight themselves, they could watch the result of the mischief they had done, and they did not have to wait long before the owners began to pour out of the academy, and to make for the horse-sheds.

"Get your handkerchiefs ready," said Tommy.

"What for?" asked the others.

"To stuff into your mouths if you find you can't hold in from laughing."

"That's so, for if we should get caught at it, we'll get bounced sure."

"Yes, be careful."

By this time the owners began to arrive. It was dusk, and quite dark under the shed when they got there, and each began to get at his team without loss of time, all the while talking about the exercises they had just been listening to.

"Whoa, Crusoe, whoa!" said the owner of the one-horse chaise. "Back! back!"

"Back out, Mungo!" said another one.

"Whoa there, Israel! What in thunder is the matter with you?" yelled the old chap, whose horse, contrary to the behavior of his whole life, had attempted to fodder on his arm.

"Hello! What's the matter here? Thunder and biled wax!" said the owner of the chaise, after backing it from under the shed and seeing it lopped over on one side, on account of the difference in the size of the wheels.

"And what, in the name of Jeddah of Jerico, is the matter with my wagon?" asked one, whose hind wheels had been changed for the forward ones.

"Here, this isn't my hoss!" put in another of the discomfited party.

"Nor this isn't my Debby! Here, that's my mare. We've made a mistake."

"I guess we've all made something. Look at that!" said another, pointing to his lopsided wagon.

"Thunder and biled wax!" again put in the old fellow of the chaise, who still stood looking at the old ark in utter amazement.

"This isn't my horse. Hello! What is the meaning of this?" asked another.

"Great Moses!" put in another.

"Taters tew bile!" exclaimed still another.

"What deviltrum's been goin' on here?"

"Deviltrum indeed!"

By this time they had all got their teams backed out from under the shed, and such another looking lot of go-carts were never seen together before.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed one.

"Thunder and biled wax!" again groaned the owner of the old chaise.

"Here's a pretty muss! Who in tarnation's been doin' this?"

"Some of them pesky boys, I'll bet."

"Here, you have got my horse in your wagon!"

"And where is my harness?" asked another, a part of whose new harness had been substituted for a portion of an old and rusty one.

"Oh, the rascals! Wouldn't I just like to catch 'em!"

"Thunder and biled wax!" repeated the old man, still standing before his lopsided chaise. "And dern my cowhide butes, if they haven't gone an' changed my hoss as well! Where's my hoss—my Crusoe?" he asked mournfully.

"What made 'em do so?"

"Bust my new hat if I wouldn't just like ter pray with the rascals a few minutes."

"Whar's my Crusoe?"

"Here, whose horse is this?"

"Whar's my Crusoe?"

"Where's my wheel?"

"Whose wheel is this?"

"Ah, that's mine."

"Dod rot their pictures, if I only know who it was that played this nasty prank I'd have 'em wholoped and turned out of scule—darn my Sunday-go-to-meeting suit if I wouldn't," put in one indignant farmer, whose horse had been taken out of the shafts and harnessed in again with his head where his tail should have been. "I kinder thought as how I didn't feel any ears when I began to try for ter pat on the bridle."

"Whar's my Crusoe?"

"Here, whose horse is this?" asked another.

"Ah! that's mine—that's my Crusoe!" exclaimed the old man, joyfully.

"And is this one yours?"

"Yes, that's mine. You unharness and we'll exchange again."

"Thunder and biled wax! who'd a thort there was so much uncooked deviltry in a parcel of boys?"

"Deviltry! Why, some of these ere boys at Andover have got devils in 'em as big as woodchucks."

"I guess you are right."

"Whoa, Crusoe! What were they trying ter do with you, hey?" asked the old man, lovingly, as he got his horse back again.

It was quite dark before they all got their horses, harnesses and wheels back in place again, and the language indulged in was comical in the extreme.

The owner of Crusoe was the first to get ready, and as he got in



"Bad luck to ye for a blackguard. Take that!" said McFadden, placing his hot goose upon the lower back of the darkey.

"I've hearne queer stories 'bout the cuttins' up of the boys here at Andover."

"I'd cut 'em up if I was the master of 'em," said the farmer whose horse had been reversed.

But after awhile they all got off and departed for their homes—not, however, without stopping to tell Professor Taylor all about the trick that had been played upon them, and obtaining from him a promise to find out if he could who had done it, and punish them.

But the dear old soul never found out who did it, any more than who did so many other pieces of mischief.

The boys laughed over the affair until they were sore, and could laugh no more.

When it got dark enough to be safe they stole from their hiding-place and went to supper, finding that the news of the mixture had already reached the students, and that they were having a hearty laugh over it.

Tommy was suspected, of course, but he was sly enough to escape detection, and as so many were going away the subject was soon dropped and forgotten in the excitement.

That evening the four of them assembled in Tommy's room, where they were soon joined by about a dozen others, and a jolly good time was resolved on, and a detailed history of the afternoon's sport with the teams of the countrymen was given and heartily enjoyed.

"Now don't let us go home without having another hurrah!" said Tommy.

"Yes, one more before we go," said several, for to tell the truth there was not one of them who didn't feel just right for it.

"What shall it be?"

"Let's give it to old Pike."

"Go and serenade Prexy Taylor."

"Let the pigs out."

"Steal chickens and have a roast."

"Let's go fishing."

"Get up a serenade for the Sophs," and a dozen different suggestions were made regarding what should be done.

"No, I have it," said Tommy; "you know Lamson's big old-fashioned carryall?"

"Yes, yes. What of it?" they all asked.

"It stands under his shed. Let's go and pull it down into the meadow, take it apart and then leave it there."

"Good."

"Yes, and while we are out we can have some more fun," suggested one.

"Come on."

In a few minutes the room was deserted, and the

boys were on their way over to the Mansion House, for the purpose of carrying out the proposed joke.

The old carryall was quite as large as a modern circus wagon, and six or eight persons could ride in it with a plenty of room if not comfort.

It must have been built soon after the discovery of America, and contained timber enough to build a good-sized man-of-war.

Well, it was dark, and the boys kept as still as mice.

Stealing softly up under the shed they soon manned the old contrivance and started off in the direction of the meadow.

"Guess the old ark hasn't been greased lately," said Dovey, who was pushing behind.

"No, he only greases it every Fourth of July."

"And even then he only spits on the axles," said Tommy.

"Won't the old man sputter when he finds out that his old caravan is gone?"

"Won't he howl?"

"And stamp around?"

"And swear it has been stolen?"

"And go for old mutton-head Pray, the old constable?"

"And won't old Pray take on consequential airs, and imagine himself the biggest man in town?"

"And so he is the biggest man in town."

"How so?"

"Measured around the belly he is," said Tommy, whereat they all laughed and trudged along most merrily.

"I wish we could play a trick on him," said Dovey.

"Wouldn't it be fun?"

"Let's go and play a trick on him after we get through with this."

"Agreed, the old nuisance," was the general response.

By this time they had reached the meadow, and then began to make preparations to take off the wheels.

"Oh, isn't this bully fun," said one.

Just then the curtain of the carryall was pushed aside and a big red face was thrust out.

It was Constable Pray himself.

They did not see him at first, and I will state right here that the old fat rascal had got drunk that evening and had gone out into the carryall to sleep it off, and might have stayed there till morning had the boys not started him.

As it was it took him some time to wake up and realize what the matter was, why the peaceful old ark was moving.

"Hello, you young scoundrels," he yelled, "what the devil are you up to here?"

Had they been struck by lightning they could not have been more startled.

For an instant they stood irresolute and confounded for they all knew him, the very man they had been talking about and proposing to play a trick upon—the dreaded constable of the town.

"You young rascallions! you candidates for the gallows and prison! I know you all, every mother's son of you. You are playing a trick on a worthy citizen, and now if you don't take this carriage right back and put it where you found it, I'll arrest every young rascal of you. Zounds! but this is pretty work, isn't it?"

There appeared to be no disposition on the part of anyone to argue the point with him.

"Come, now, be lively!" he howled.

Without a word they again took hold of the carryall and started back with it. But a madder lot of fellows never lived.

It was much harder work taking it back than bringing it down, for now it was up hill and they were paying for their fun pretty dearly.

But they managed to have a little quiet fun out of it anyway, for Tommy was in the front rank and did the guiding of the concern. Every rough place he could find he would run the old ark into and bounce the old fellow around frightfully and make him yell like blazes.

"Be careful there, you young devil cubs! If you tip me over I'll arrest the whole caboodle of you, remember that. Hurry up now."

Then they would go on a piece further, and until Tommy could find another bad place in the road.

"Hold on, you young scoundrels! I'll put every one of you in the jug."

But they made him no reply and conversed with each other in whispers. Tommy was looked to as a leader, and after getting about half way back to where they had started from, he passed some instructions along the line.

They now approached a small bridge under which ran a muddy stream. On arriving at it they started into a lively trot and ran the carriage off the bridge, and tipped it over into the water and muck, after which they took to their heels and were out of sight in less than half a minute.

Constable Pray landed head first into the drink, pitching out of the carriage as it went over and going in like a bullfrog.

He didn't yell, for he had something to do just then, and that was to get his head above the water and get the mud out of his eyes, mouth and ears. After that he yelled, you bet.

He was standing in the middle of the stream, up to his own middle in mud and water, and there he stuck, being a big fat fellow, unable to pull either one of his legs out.

"Murder, murder! Thieves! runaways! stop 'em, step 'em! Help, help!" he shouted. "Come back here, you devils! Come and take me out of this. Come quick, or I'll arrest every mother's son of you!"

But the boys did not hear him, or if they did they probably concluded that he would have to get out himself before he could arrest anybody, and so they skipped along and sought their respective rooms without loss of time, even reserving their laugh till afterwards.

The soaked, muddy constable slashed around like a hippopotamus, all the while yelling for help and unable to get out himself.

"Oh, the young devils; but won't I fix 'em for this! I'll send every one of 'em to jail for stealing; for assault and battery, so I will. Help, help!"

But to tell the truth the old fellow did not know a single one of the boys. He supposed them to be academy fellows, and to save his life he could not swear that they were, and so his threats were not very dangerous.

After standing by the overturned carriage and yelling for nearly half an hour, some citizens heard him and came to his rescue. But what to make of it they could not tell for their lives.

They pulled the old fellow out, and at last found who he was, but he was so mad that he could not talk understandingly, and the whole affair seemed as great a puzzle as could be.

But they knew that the old fellow got drunk occasionally, and so concluded that he had somehow manage to tumbled into the brook, and yet to account for the carryall, that was the mystery.

"Where is your horse, Mr. Pray?" asked one.

"Horse be thundered!" he howled, as he danced around in his wrath. "I don't have a horse."

"Had no horse. But the carriage?"

"That be blowed! I was asleep in it."

"Asleep in it?" they all exclaimed.

"No, I mean I was awake in it."

"And without a horse?"

"Confound it, I mean that—that—rats and snakes! what the devil do I mean anyway?"

"We give it up, Mr. Pray, and sadly suspect that you don't know yourself."

"Sir."

"This is a bad example for a town officer to set to the people," put in another.

"Confound you for a lot of jackasses, don't I tell you?"

"No, you do not, and what's more we don't believe you can. You are drunk, sir."

"Soap-grease and sugar! How dare you, sir, talk that way to me? Me, the constable, sir! I'll arrest you, sir."

"Better arrest yourself, I think."

"Or the carriage," suggested another.

"I tell you—here, hold on," said he, as the disgusted citizens turned to go away.

But they refused to listen to him any longer, and left him standing there dancing and howling like a mad dervish.

He started to follow, but he was so wet and cold that he could not catch up to them, and so had to have his cursing all alone by himself. But as he toddled along he began to think of the predicament he was in, and whether he wouldn't have quite as much trouble in explaining the affair to others as he had experienced in the case of his rescuers.

At all events he concluded that he would be a laughing stock for the whole town if the thing became known, and so he went to the owner of the carriage, who knew his weakness, and told him all about it, making him agree to say nothing about it and he would pay all damage that had been done to the vehicle.

This the gentleman finally agreed to, and they took a horse and went to return the carriage, working for an hour or two in order to do so.

So the joke turned squarely on the constable after all, and the boys were perfectly satisfied with the affair, and laughed heartily over it, although their guilty consciences made them keep sharply away from his neighborhood for a long time after that, and he was never so careless again as to go to sleep in a carryall.

The next day Tommy Bounce and several of the scholars started for home to spend the short vacation before the commencement of the new term.

Tommy received a welcome home, for they were all glad to see him, even the old negro, Moses, on whom he had played so many tricks. Jakey, his brother, had become quite steady in his absence, but he was right glad to see Tommy, for he knew that there would be fun for a little while at least.

CHAPTER XIV.

We left our hero, Tommy Bounce, on his arrival home from school to spend a week's vacation.

They were all glad to see him, and for a short time he was the family lion. He had a great deal to tell them of course, but he took very good care not to tell them anything about the mischief he had cut up or how many scrapes he had been engaged in.

The old darkey, Moses, was at work for his father as usual. In fact, it was just about as good as his home, for his wife, Dinah, was also working there, and the old man was as happy as a big sunflower.

Tommy's father was very proud of him, and told his mother he would yet be an honor to them.

But the old lady shook her head, saying:

"Maybe so, Josiah, but he's too mischievous to make anything more than a lawyer."

"Oh, Maria, I guess he's got over that."

"Ah, Josiah, you know what is bred in the blood stays long in the bone."

"You alius did like to find fault with Tommy, but I'll warrant that there arn't a steadier boy in school at Andover."

"We shall see, we shall see," sighed Mrs. Bounce as she turned away.

Moses and Jakey were working in the garden, planting early vegetables, and Tommy was telling them some of his experiences, which kept them both on a grin. In fact, Moses' big mouth looked as if it would never shut together again.

"By golly, Tommy, dat yer am de best story I eber hear in my life!" he exclaimed, yaw-hawing and slapping his thigh with his big black hand.

"Oh, you must have had splendid times there," said Jakey.

"Don't you make any mistake, we did."

"Shoo way dar!" yelled Moses, chucking a stone at some turkeys who persisted in scratching up the seeds as fast as he and Jakey could plant them. "Gosh blow dem yer turkeys, dey jes' bodder de life out ob me."

"Why don't you fix them, Moses?" asked Tommy.

"Fix 'em! Goshermighty, if I had my way I'd fix 'em fo' dinner—'deed I would, 'deed I would, chile."

"Wait a minute and I'll fix 'em so that they won't scratch any more seeds," said Tommy.

"Don't harm 'em, Tommy; it'll break your mother's heart if anything happens to dem yer birds."

"Oh, I won't hurt them," replied Tommy, going to a currant bush and cutting some twigs.

Cutting off several pieces, about four inches long, he proceeded to sharpen one end of each and cut a crease around the other, so that a string could be tied into it and not slip off.

"Now catch me one of 'em Jakey," said he, when he had got things all ready.

Moses was watching him with great interest, for he couldn't make up his mind to save his skin what the boy was going to do.

Jakey caught them both at one grab, and came up holding them by the legs.

"Dar am de old couple, Mr. Gobbler and Mrs. Turkey," said Moses.

"All right, they shall both have some extra spurs on. Here, hold the gobbler, Moses."

Moses did as directed, and Tommy proceeded to fasten a stick to each of the turkey's legs with a bit of string, in such a way as to allow the pointed end to drag behind on the ground.

It took only a moment to do it, and when the old gobbler was released he took to his heels and was soon out of the garden, after which they proceeded to fix the other in the same way. But Moses couldn't understand it.

"Is yer gwine for ter make 'em fight?" he asked.

"No, only going to play a joke on them."

"Jokin' wid a pair ob turkeys! Wall I neber seed de like of you, Tommy, neber in my born days."

Just as soon as Mrs. Turkey found herself on her feet again, she started to join her husband. But what either of them thought of the bits of sharpened sticks on their legs is not known, for they didn't say anything about them.

Moses watched them for awhile and then asked:

"What am de joke?"

"Wait a few moments," replied Tommy.

"Perhaps they're going down behind the barn to enjoy it between themselves," suggested Jakey.

"Oh, they'll be back again, never fear."

"Yaw, dat am so, suah. By golly, yer just hab ter put a big stone on de top ob ebery kernel ob corn dat yer plant, or dem yer birds will scratch it up," growled Moses.

"Well, we will wait a bit," said Tommy, resuming his seat on the fence, while Moses and Jakey resumed their work.

As they had calculated, the turkeys did not remain away long, for pretty soon they saw them stealing under the fence into the garden.

"Now, then, watch 'em," said Tommy.

The turkeys marched boldly into the center of the garden where the corn was planted and commenced operations for sampling the kernels. But the sticks that Tommy had fastened to their legs, although they did not prevent them from walking, when they attempted to scratch and push their legs backwards as all birds do, they would strike into the ground and force them ahead, just as a person can push themselves forward with a walking-stick, so that whenever they attempted to scratch they would force themselves ahead and walk off in spite of themselves.

It was a comical sight, and the boys laughed loudly over it. As for Moses, he lay right down in the dirt and rolled and laughed with all his might.

"Oh, Lord! oh, golly! Yah! Yah! Yah! Oh, gosh! oh, snickems! Oh, ho! ho! ho! Hole on, chile, hole on! Take 'em away or I shall laugh myself into a snifit fit. Oh, ho! ho! ho! gosh! beeswax! Look at 'em!"

The boys laughed quite as much at Moses as they did at the surprised and discomfited turkeys, for he rolled and kicked like a mule with the colic, and every moment or so he would sit up and take another look at them and then roll, kick and laugh again.

The poor turkeys did present a curious sight, and they looked scared and troubled at what was happening to them. They couldn't understand it at all.

They would stand a few moments and look inquiringly at each other, and then still remembering the corn that was planted around them, they would mount a hill of it and commence to scratch for it. Then their walking-sticks would catch in the dirt and force them ahead and away from the hill.

They tried it in a dozen different ways, but all to no purpose; they could make their legs go forward well enough, but the moment they attempted to move them backwards their game was up.

Finally, the old hen-turkey got one of hers twisted around so that it did not work, but the other one was all right, and the result was that when she attempted to scratch it would whirl her right around and astonish her even more than ever.

Still the boys laughed, and old Moses rolled and shouted with laughter.

"De best thing dat I eber sawd. Look at de ole hen, see her go 'round."

"Hello! What's this about?" asked Mr. Bounce, who had heard the laughing and gone to the garden to learn the cause of it.

"Only look at the turkeys, pop," said Jakey, pointing to the bewildered birds.

"What of them?"

"Oh, my goshermighty, I laugh so dat I can't hardly breave. Only think, Massa Bounce, of playing a joke on a turkey!" said Moses, getting up from the ground.

"Well, really, I don't see anything to laugh at," replied Mr. Bounce.

Tommy explained to him that the turkeys were scratching up the corn, and then showed him how he had fixed them.

Then the old gentleman laughed as loudly as any of them, and pronounced it the best thing he had ever seen; and after watching them a few moments, went into the house and returned with his wife.

"What foolery is this, I wonder?" she asked, as they came up to the garden fence.

"The most comical and ingenious contrivance that I ever saw in my life," said he, laughing.

"I guess you think so, Josiah Bounce. I don't think you act much like a deacon of the church, and the father of a growing family, laughing and cutting up like a circus clown."

"Oh, but look at the turkeys. See 'em trying scratch—see 'em—see 'em walk off in spite of themselves."

"What upon earth does it mean?"

Mr. Bounce explained it to her, and then she was mad.

"Josiah Bounce, I am astonished at you. You, the father of a growing family, and lately made a deacon of the church, encouraging such things in your sons," said she.

"Oh, but see how comical it is."

"I see nothing comical in it at all. Now you see how much he has given up his pranks. I knew very well he hadn't. I tell you, Josiah Bounce, that he's a chip of the old block, and I'll be sworn that he's up to all sorts of mischief at school. Thomas Bounce," she added, calling to our hero, "you just take them things off of those turkeys, quick, now."

"Can't catch 'em, mammy," said he.

"You didn't find any difficulty in catching them when you wanted to cut up your monkeyshines."

"Well, but they are frightened now."

"Better wait until they go to roost at night."

"Well, all right for you, Josiah Bounce, Deacon Bounce," said she, turning back to the house, "keep right on encouraging your sons in such things and see where they will be."

Mr. Bounce stood and laughed at the comical antics of the turkeys and secretly made up his mind to let the things remain on them, as it made them perfectly harmless as to scratching.

In the meantime old Dinah came out to see the sport, and Jakey explained it to her, for Moses could not. He was using all the wind he had to spare in shaking himself with laughter.

"Ole man, wha' yer been doin' in de dirt?" she asked, pointing to his clothes.

"Cou'dn't help it, Dinah, no how, it am de most dreefulest comical thing dat I eber seen or hear tell ob in my life," said he, again letting off a roar that would have astonished a musical donkey.

And Dinah laughed herself almost as loudly as her husband did.

"It's dreefule funny, but, ole man, I don't get down an' roll in de dirt like a mule on account ob it. Don't yer go for to do dat agin, for I'se the one dat hab to wash an' mend 'em," said she, returning to her work.

The turkeys kept trying to scratch up the corn for an hour or so, during which they walked themselves all over the garden without getting a single kernel, after which they seemed to become disgusted with themselves and all undecided in their own minds whether they were turkeys or geese, and finally marched off and gave it up for a bad job.

The next day was Sunday, and of course Tommy went to church with the rest of the family, and saw many of his old friends and former schoolmates.

Moses and Dinah also went, creating quite as much fun as ever among the young folks, for they always dressed comically.

It was before the present style of bustles were worn by the ladies, but they had another style even



"Hello, you young scoundrels," he yelled, "what the devil are you up to here?"

larger, and which looked more outlandish and ridiculous.

Not to wear a bustle was to be laughed at, and the larger they were the more fashionable the wearer was. Even old Dinah wore one, and a whopper it was, too, for she always went to extremes in every thing, much the same as all colored people in matters of dress.

When the old lady got dressed and ready for church her bustle was the most noticeable thing about her. It was as big as a nail keg, and stuck out about as far. Even Moses was surprised, and opened his eyes as he gazed upon his old wife in her new fixings.

"Goshermichael! Thunder an hogs, Dinah!" he exclaimed, walking around her several times.

"Wha's de matter wid you, ole man?" she asked, rather snappishly.

"Goshermighty, Dinah!"

"What, yer foolin' 'bout? Didn't yer neber see a lady dressed befo'?"

"Dressed before? Goshermighty, yes, but I neber seed one dress so much *behind* as you are."

"G'long wid yer nonsense, Moses."

"Ole woman, let me ride to meetin' on dat yer hump o' yours!"

"Better look out, Moses."

"You better look out yerself or yer will get a corn on yer back, luggin' around dat yer bustle. What am it, ole gal; a bag ob oats?" he asked, laughing.

"Mind yer own business; guess I know what's right. Tain't not a bit bigger den any fashionable woman wears, an' if yer don't like it, yerjus' stay home wid de cattle."

"Wall, Dinah, dar am only one kind ob cattle dat hab a hump on der back like dat; de—camel."

"Oh, you go whitewash yerself!" said she, flirting from the room.

Tommy and Jakey had seen and overheard this little chat about the big bustle, and of course they enjoyed it very much.

Tommy was busy in his mind all the way to church, thinking how he could have some fun with Dinah's bustle, and he had some difficulty in arriving at a conclusion about it, on account of its being such a delicate subject to handle.

But after returning home an idea struck him, and he lost no time in making it known to his brother.

Dinah wasn't to attend church again until evening, on account of having work to do, and, of course, on her return she laid aside her good clothes and bustle while going about her affairs.

This enabled Tommy and Jakey to steal into the old woman's bed-room and explore the mysteries of

that bustle. They found it was a bag filled with hay, having a string on each end so that it could be fastened to the body.

"Now, then, I have it. Wait until she gets through with her work, and just before she gets ready to dress up again for church, and then we will cut a slit in it and hide one of the young kittens in it," said Tommy.

"Oh, gracious, yes!" exclaimed Jakey, who hadn't had so much fun since Tommy went away to school.

"Then we can go along and see the fun."

"Yes; but won't the kitten squeal and give us away?" asked Jakey.

"Well, we can try it anyway. They will have had their supper and be sleepy by the time we get ready. I guess it will be all right."

"I hope so."

"Well, let's get out of here or somebody may drop on our little racket," saying which they stealthily withdrew.

As Tommy had suggested, they found that the kittens had just been in the milk business, and being at peace with all the world and other kittens, they were fast asleep and wanted to remain so.

When everything was ready Tommy took one of them and stoic up to Dinah's room. With a knife he cut a slit in the bustle large enough to admit the kitten, then making for it a comfortable nest he placed it in without waking it and then pinned it neatly up again all right and tidy.

But he had scarcely done so when he heard Dinah in the hallway coming up. He withdrew out of sight, and she came on singing:

"I want ter be an angel wid a great big wing,
An' play on a harp wid golden string,
Den wait 'till I put on de robe,
Wait 'till I put on de robe,
Oh, yes, oh, yes!"

"Oh, yes, I'll wait 'till you put on your robe and bustle, too," said Tommy to himself, as he stole softly down stairs to find Jakey.

It was getting late and in a very few moments the gallus old lady came down all dressed and bustled ready for church, and as this was pretty good evidence that the kitten had not been wakened, the boys took heart and laid low for developments.

"Come, ole man, am you ready?" she asked, calling to Moses,

"I'se all ready, Dinah. Got yer bustle on?"

"Course I has; wha' you think; s'pose I's goin' ter meetin' a lookin' like a scarecrow?"

"Scarecrow don't go fer ter wear bustles, ole gal," replied Moses.

"But fashionable folks do,"

"I say, Dinah, de good Lor', He gib you putty good share of bustle anyway."

"Oh, come along an' squit yer foolin'. Guess I know what's what."

Moses offered his arm with meek politeness and away they started for church, followed by Tommy and his brother.

He listened carefully but could hear nothing from the kitten, that was probably enjoying its ride, and still asleep.

Finally they reached the church just as the opening hymn was being sung, and the boys made it a point to get several seats away from their colored friends.

It must have been the singing that woke up the kitten, or else it was seized with a sudden desire to join in, but at all events after it was finished and the parson was just swinging himself into a long peccation, a prolonged and mournful "mew" was heard all over the church.

Tommy nudged his brother, while nearly everybody looked around under their feet and in their pews, to see if a cat hadn't strayed in.

But of course it was not found, and it was only a moment before the "mew" was repeated even louder than at first, and then everybody turned and looked inquiringly around.

Then it was heard again, and Moses took a careful look through his pew.

Dinah also got up and lifted her ample skirts, to see if a mouse was hiding there.

While thus standing, the imprisoned kitten again manifested its desire for supper and liberty, and once more there was a general look around, and some smiling among the younger portion of the congregation.

It was impossible to tell where the sound of the mewing came from, for it was so muffled up, and yet it continued to come.

"I say, Dinah, are you suah dat you habn't got one ob dem kittens 'mong yer close?" asked Moses, who began to get very uneasy at the general excitement.

"Is you a fool, Mose? Wha' fur I carry a kitten roun' wid me fur? Mind de preacher," she added, in a whisper.

"But dat soun's as tho' it cum frum aroun' yer passon, somehow," persisted Moses.

"Squit yer nonsense!" she replied, sharply.

Just then she turned savagely around to see who had touched her from behind, but she saw no one, although she felt something.

"Mew!" came again, louder than ever.

"Dat cat am about you somewhere, ole gal, an' I know it," whispered Moses.

At that moment the kitten spoke again and made a vigorous movement in the bustle.

"Oh Lor! oh Lor! I'se got 'em!" yelled the old wench, leaping to her feet and grabbing her bustle with both hands.

The most intense excitement followed this announcement, and in an instant everybody was standing up.

"Wha', Wha'," stammered Moses.

"Lemme out! quick, lemme out! oh, I'se got 'em!" she yelled again, as she rushed out of the pew, tumbling Moses over and stepping on him savagely.

"What is it?" asked a dozen voices.

"Lemme out!" she yelled, starting for the door, still holding fast to her animated bustle.

The crowd made way and followed her out, but she outstripped them all as she went yelling towards home as hard as she could run.

Moses was completely dumbfounded, but a few people who followed her out into the moonlight saw her stop a moment, open her dress, and unharness herself of that bustle in about a quarter part of no time.

They came up to her just as she had that poor kitten by the tail. The next instant that kitten had stopped living.

"What is the matter, Dinah?" asked several.

"Matter! Do you see dat?" she asked, holding up by the tail her late tormentor.

"A kitten! Where was it?"

"In my—I say, whar am dat misable husban' ob mine?" she asked, suddenly.

"He's coming. Why?"

"He's done dat yer dirty piece ob business, an I'll jes warm his ear, yer bet. It's a good Christian woman an' a fuss-rate cook, but when a man hides a kitten in my bustle somebody hab got to ter feel me, dat's all."

At that moment Moses and several others came up.

"What am de matter wid yer, Dinah?" he asked, approaching rapidly.

She drew back and struck him a welt across the face with the dead kitten, which she still held in her hand.

"Dat's what's de matter wid me; what's de matter wid you, you black, bandy-legged old galoot?"

She was about to follow it up, when the crowd interfered and kept them apart. It was some time before quiet could be restored and Moses could understand what it was about.

"You done it; don't tell me dat you didn't, fo' you war mad when yer seed me hab it on dis mornin'," said she.

"By golly, dat yer war dat devil's boy, Tommy Bounce," said Moses to himself, seeing that he could not make himself heard in his own favor with Dinah.

They fought and quarreled all the way home, and services were resumed in church, although it took some time to get the people into a very serious mood, the thing had made so much excitement and fun. But Tommy and Jakey kept their faces and looked as innocent as doves, while their mother watched them narrowly, suspecting that they were at the bottom of some mischief or other.

Dinah's pigheadedness, however, saved them, for she would not listen to the suggestion that anybody but her husband had played the trick on her, although he knew well enough who it was.

But the affair became known all over the town, and created much boisterous merriment. It was a long time before either Dinah or Moses went to church again, and when she did go finally, she went without her bustle.

At the end of the week's vacation Tommy returned to Andover, whither we will follow him in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

WE left our hero, Tommy Bounce, just returning to school at the end of a short vacation.

The boys were all glad to see each other and especially to meet with Tommy again, for he had become by this time the prime favorite with nearly everyone at school.

But there were a few persons who were not glad to a cent's worth to see Tommy back again, and one of these was Pike, the janitor. A slight hope, only a slight one, that was that something would happen to him; that he would get blown up with gunpowder; kicked by a mule; have a front seat at a railroad smashup; get collared by the small-pox, or some such a thing might happen to prevent his return.

But his lower jaw dropped when he saw his mischievous enemy turn up all right and smiling once more, and he mentally vowed that he would crush him out before the term was over, and so be rid of him for good.

So he went to work cautiously and laid his plans carefully to entrap Tommy in some way, whereby he might be revenged for what was past and never be troubled with him again.

One of his first mean performances, soon after school began, was to interfere with Tommy and his

friends in connection with the gymnasium building, but they soon fixed him in this respect by going to Professor Taylor and making their grievances known.

This being a triumph for the boys it of course made them bolder, and open warfare was proclaimed between them and the janitor, which grew in bitterness every day.

Pike had an old horse, which he kept at the expense of the institution, a bony, lazy old nag, that he used to ride around with whenever he felt particularly lazy himself.

"We must have some fun with Pike's old white nag," said Tommy one day.

"I only wish we could," suggested George Dovey. "I'd like to do something to get even with him, for he seems determined to make it as disagreeable for us as he can all the time."

"That is so, the old eel-pot."

"But we must be very careful, for if he could only catch us at one thing he would have us expelled, without doubt," said Tommy.

"But how can he? The boys are all as mum as oysters."

"That's so, but whatever we do we had best do it ourselves, and then we are sure of it, for two many cooks not only spoil the broth, but some of them may tell how the broth is made."

"I'm with you, Tommy. What shall we do?"

"Let me see. He keeps the old rip down in the pasture back of the school-house. I say, Dovey, let's get some black paint and ornament him."

"All right, but where shall we get it?"

"I have it. Go up to Morrill's printing ink factory and get some lampblack. There is some camphene up in our room that will do to mix it first-rate."

This was before the days of kerosene or gas to any great extent, and camphene, whale-oil, and candles were burned by everybody, especially the students.

"That will be bully. When shall we do it?" asked Dovey, entering into the heart of the affair with his customary earnestness.

"Well, you go up there on the quiet, and get some in a pail this afternoon as soon as we get through recitation, and I will skirmish around and find a brush. But be careful, Dovey, don't let anybody know where you are going or what you get."

"All right, Tommy."

With this understanding they went into school, and when recitation was over each of them went to carry out his part of the programme.

The lampblack and brush were obtained, and with the camphene, a nice black paint was mixed up into the pail and they were ready for business.

That night at about ten o'clock, Tommy and his chum stole softly forth and started for the pasture where Pike's old white nag boarded.

They found him walking around as though expecting some one, and they at once proceeded to pay him a visit.

"Get hold of his mane, Dovey, and lead him up this way," said Tommy, looking carefully around to make sure that he was not observed.

Dovey found no trouble in doing as requested.

The night was partially moonlit and bright, and the subject of this ornamentation being white they had no trouble in seeing what they were about.

"Whoa, Dobbin," said Tommy. "Now be a good horse and I will rig you up nicely."

He was quite an artist, was Tommy Bounce, and taking the brush he began to paint an imitation harness on the horse, taking his time and representing every portion of the gear so naturally that in the night especially it was hard to tell it from a genuine harness.

"Good! good! good!" whispered Dovey, as he laughed and watched operations.

"How does that look?"

"Oh, bully. What fun this will make!"

"You bet it will. Hold on; I'll put on the finishing touches," said he. "This is it," and in letters as big as your hand he painted on the horse's side, "Pike's Poacher."

"Good enough. Best in the world."

Tommy stood off and laughed at the effect.

"Oh, won't he be mad though?" said Dovey.

"Yes, and we must be mighty sharp and make sure he does not find out who did it. Here, we will chuck the pail and brush down the old well," said he, proceeding to do so.

This old well which stood in the pasture just back of the academy, held many a secret in those happy days. Wonder if it is still there?

"Now let down the bars, lead him through, and let him roam around the remainder of the right and show his new harness."

This being done they stole back into the room and went to bed in high glee.

The old horse nosed around all night, and at length, finding the gate open leading into Professor Taylor's front yard, he went in, and the next morning was found standing solemnly in the graveled walk, headed towards the house and seemingly waiting for the old gentleman to come out.

The janitor went to the academy as usual the next morning to ring the bell for prayers, after which he went down into the pasture, as he always did, to water his horse.

Not seeing him, and finding the bars down, he at once suspected that he had been stolen, and nearly lost his wits from fright.

He hurried back to his house, and from there over to the boarding-house, asking every one whom he met if they knew anything about his horse.

A large number of students belonging to the Theological Seminary were abroad, and also many of the Academy students, and in a very short time the news spread all round that somebody had stolen old Pike's horse.

But when Professor Taylor came out of his front door he was confronted by the lost animal, and for a moment he was utterly confounded, seemingly unable to understand whether it was a hobgoblin or a flesh and blood reality.

Then he approached the creature cautiously, and walked around him. At first he could not make out the meaning of it at all, and didn't know whose horse it was or what kind of a harness it was he had on, but when he got on the other side and read "Pike's Poacher," then he understood something more about it.

"Some of those boys' doings," said he, while a good-natured smile stole over his kindly face.

"Gracious me, what a sight! Get out of here, you beast, get out!" he added, shaking his cane at him, and making him head about, "go away, you abomination; begone!"

After many threatening flourishes and fierce denunciations he managed to worry the horse out of his yard and into the street. Here he was met by a party of students, and such a shout as they sent up is seldom heard,

They all appeared to comprehend the case at a glance, and their shouts frightened the beast into a run, and away he went up the street, down which dozens of students were coming on their way to prayers.

Each took up the other's shout, and in a few moments something in the shape of prayers and school was forgotten, and a crowd of the younger boys, among whom were Tommy and Dovey, were racing the bewildered horse first up and then down the street, making high old sport.

At this juncture Pike came upon the scene. He didn't even know his own horse, and had it not been for the lettering he might never have suspected whose nag it was at all.

For a long time the boys kept him running so he could not get near enough to see the joke about the harness, but when he did, he was mad enough to fly.

He had managed to stop and catch the horse almost in front of the Academy, and as by this time the scholars had nearly all arrived, it may well be supposed that there was fun.

They gathered around Pike and his bewildered beast, and such a running fire of jokes as were kept up at his expense, he had never heard of before.

"Where did you get your new harness, old fellow?" asked one.

"It sets well," said another.

"He can lay down in it without hurting it, or himself," put in a third.

"You can rub him down without taking his harness off."

"What did it cost you, Mr. Pike?"

"It will cost dear to the person who did it, if I can only find out who it was," said Pike.

"Pike's Poacher," first one and then another would read aloud.

"Shut up, or I'll poach you!" said Pike, shaking his fist at his tormenters.

"What, didn't he pay for the horse's board?"

"Poachers don't pay for anything."

"Good harness; bully!"

"Let those laugh who win," said he.

At that moment Professor Taylor came up.

"Professor, do you see what some of the students have been doing to my horse?" he asked, sadly.

"Yes, I found him in my front yard just now when I came out of my house," said the old man, smiling in spite of himself, whereat the boys took it up again and shouted lustily.

"It is an outrage, sir," said Pike.

"I should call it so, Mr. Pike," remarked the old gentleman, evidently trying hard to look solemn.

"And what is to be done about it, sir?"

"I hardly knew."

"Might I not suggest, sir," said one of the older students, "that the matter might be adjusted by painting the remainder of the animal black."

This created another laugh.

"Or a coat of whitewash," suggested another.

"Gentlemen, this levity is unseemly," said Mr. Taylor. "Whoever did this has committed an outrage, and if he can be discovered he shall be severely punished, and perhaps handed over to the offend-ed law."

This made them look more sober.

"And I will find out who did it if it takes me a whole year," put in Pike.

Pike led his horse back to the pasture and attempted to rub the paint off; but it was no use, it had fastened itself into both hide and hair.

Tommy Bounce and Dovey had enjoyed the fun quite as well as any of them, and although it was generally supposed that one or both of them were the artistic authors of the mischief, yet they kept their faces so well that even those most intimate with them were in doubt.

As for Pike and his horse, the misery was not over for them by long odds.

The affair became known all over Andover, and the pasture was besieged with those who came to see the painted horse, and so much fun and excitement did it create that he was obliged to shut the animal up in the barn to keep him out of sight.

Nor was this all. Finding it utterly impossible to



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"Oh, lor! oh, lor! I's got 'em!" yelled the old wench, leaping to her feet and grabbing her bustle with both hands.

get the paint off, he at length went and got some more and painted the horse black from head to foot, making him look even worse, if possible, than before.

The boys had often seen Pike mad, but never had they known him to be in such a towering passion as he was over this affair, and never had there been a subject which afforded them so much sport as this one had.

The boys canvassed the affair among themselves, and without any proof either one way or the other, they came to the conclusion that the trick had originated with Tommy Bounce, the prince of mischief and jolly fellows.

As for Pike, he expended his utmost ingenuity to find out the authors of the mischief, but at last he was obliged to give it up and grow poor on suspicions.

But the horse that had originally been a white one was now a dirty black, and remained so up to the day of his death.

And yet there was one method whereby he could obtain a mean and partial revenge.

He had given up suspecting any particular one, and was apparently resolved on getting square with the whole school.

He had charge of the boarding-house or dining-hall where all the boarding students took their meals, and for a long time after the trick on his horse he furnished the meanest food he could get.

Especially was this the case with the coffee. It was just as bad as it could well be, and caused much grumbling and dissatisfaction among the students, who named it "old boots," "dish-water," and many other things.

But Pike appeared to delight in his petty tyranny, and to imagine that he was paying the boys all off for their tricks upon him at various times.

One morning Tommy Bounce came into the great dining-room holding up an old boot.

"Gentlemen," said he, "have any of you lost a boot?"

A buzz of excitement followed the question, and Pike stood glaring at him, without, however, knowing what was coming.

"Where did you find it?" asked several.

"Well, gentleman, I just came through the kitchen, and having a curiosity to know how our beloved janitor managed to get us up such delicious coffee, I raised the lid of the great urn and found this boot in it," said he, soberly.

A roar of laughter, followed by cries and squeams, and exclamations filled the room.

"It's a lie, sir!—a lie!" shouted Pike, as soon as he could be heard.

"Gentlemen, catch the fragrance of your coffee and then smell of this boot and see if I am not telling the truth."

"It's a lie, Thomas Bounce! Leave the room!"

Tommy handed the boot around for inspection. The truth was, he was purposely late, and knowing that no more of the stuff would be called for after he made the announcement, he had procured the old boot and dipped it into the coffee urn as he stole through the kitchen, and the consequence was the boot was soaked, and many who did not know the trick thought he was telling the truth, and lost their appetites at once.

The boot went the rounds in spite of Pike, who was livid with rage, and the universal verdict was that Pike had made the coffee out of steeped old boots and shoes, and they all got up and left the room, uttering cries of disgust, and threatening to expose him to the Faculty.

Pike was frightened, and, in truth, he came very near losing his situation on account of it, for the affair was reported to the school officials, and they ordered an investigation.

The result was that they had first-rate tea and coffee after that, and a vote of thanks, half in fun, half in earnest, was given to Tommy Bounce for his labors in the case.

But if the janitor had been down on Tommy before, he felt that it would be a pleasure to skin him alive now.

Before Tommy went there to school Pike had the old goat so much in subjection that he would mind him pretty well; but now Tommy had the hard-headed animal under treatment, and Pike could scarcely manage him at all.

One day soon after the coffee affair, Tommy was playing with the goat, when Pike approached and ordered him away.

"I have a right to be here and play with the goat as I like. The grounds are not yours, neither is the goat," replied Tommy, with spirit, while Dovey and his friends gathered around.

"Don't you talk back to me, you scapegrace!"

"What will you do about it, if I do talk back?"

"I'll break your neck for you!"

"No, you won't, old Boots," said he, replying quickly, and giving him a nickname that lasted him for years, if not for all his life.

"I'll set the goat at you."

"Better try it, I guess."

"I had, hey? Here, Butt, go for him!" said he, clapping his hands together, and attempting to 'sic' the goat upon him. "Business, Butt, business!"

said Tommy, pointing to Pike.

The result was, that the goat obeyed Tommy and

went for the janitor. He went for him bald-headed, and striking him just below the belt behind, he knocked him sprawling upon his face and he rooted up the ground with his big snout almost as well as a four-legged hog could have done it.

Nor did he stop at that; he pranced around, was just in time to give him another as he was getting up on his hands and knees. Again he measured his length on the ground and bellowed like a bull.

"Take him away! Take him away!" he shouted, while the boys laughed as though they would die.

"Whi you ever attempt to sic him on to me again?" asked Tommy.

"No, no, never!"

"Or any of the other boys?"

"No, no. Take him away."

"And will you treat us like gentlemen?"

"Yes, yea, I will, only call off that cussed goat."

"All right. Here, Butt, come away!" said he, and instantly the goat obeyed him and ran after the boys, shaking his head and stumpy tail.

"Cuss my cussed luck," said Pike, getting up and shaking the dust from his clothes. "I know that boy will be the death of me. I've a good mind to poison him as I ever had to do anything in the world," and he went off growling to wash and mend his battered nose.

The goat had become greatly attached to Tommy and his friends, and would follow them around like a dog, while he could make him do any number of comical and interesting tricks.

That afternoon being Saturday and no school, the boys were out for a good time, and after this adventure with Pike they started off to go swimming, down to "Black Rock."

Butt, the goat, went along and all hands were feeling first rate. They had a good run down to the old resort by the river, and the goat appeared to enjoy it as well as any of them.

After resting awhile the boys stripped for their swim, while the goat browsed around in the bushes as though waiting for them to come out.

Joe Smith was there, having with some of his friends just come out and dressed themselves, and as he had often been the victim of Tommy and his friends, he resolved to play a joke on them now, believing that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

"Wait a moment, fellows," said he, "and we will have some fun."

By this time our friends were swimming away out in the river, and therefore not able to see what was going on.

"I'll change their shirts and stockings."

"Yes, and swap suspenders for them!" said his companions.

"Good enough!"

"And what fun it will be!"

"Yes, and change their pocket handkerchiefs and whatever they have in their pockets."

"Good! good! I'd like to play a trick on Tommy Bounce; he is always doing something to us," said another.

They began operations.

"Which are Tommy's clothes?" asked Joe.

"The blue ones."

"All right," and he went to get them.

He was stooped over near the brink of a stream, intent upon the mischief he was up to, as were the others, when the goat, who had been watching operations from behind a clump of bushes, leaped out, and striking Joe just where he had struck Pike a short time before, he knocked him headlong into the water.

Then he turned upon the others, but they knew the goat too well, and they took to their heels, allowing the astonished and half-drowned Joe Smith to scramble out as best he could.

But the goat had no notions of allowing him to get out, for every time he attempted to do so, Mr. Goat would shake his head threateningly, and shake his little stumpy tail, as much as to say, "I'm looking at you, old man."

Joe yelled like fun, and the boys swam to his rescue. But it was some time before they could understand how he happened to be in the drink with his clothes all on.

"Make him go away," said Joe.

"What were you doing?" asked Tommy.

"N-n-othing. I was only standing there on the bank when he knocked me in."

The boys laughed heartily, but had they known the truth they would have enjoyed their laugh much more.

But Tommy made the goat go away, and poor Joe, the unfortunate joker, crawled up on the bank and began to drip.

"Want to be wrung out, Joe?" asked Tommy.

"I'd like to wring your neck," muttered Joe.

"Wring whose neck?"

"That confounded goat. I'll kill him for this, see if I don't."

"Bah! can't you allow the goat to have a little fun?" said Tommy, laughing.

"Fun! Well, I hope he enjoyed it better than I did."

"Fun is generally one-sided," said Dovey.

"The kind you fellows have seems to be," said he, starting towards home.

The boys came out and enjoyed a right hearty laugh at poor Joe's expense.

From that time forth Joe Smith was not at all forward at playing off his tricks on our hero, Tommy Bounce.

CHAPTER XVI.

THERE was always lots of fun going on in the school at Andover, where our hero, Tommy Bounce, has figured through the dozen or so chapters of this truthful record; for truthful they are, each and every one of them being actual occurrences, in which the writer participated, and doubtless there are hundreds who remember them, although they may have passed out of mind until this published narration.

Those who have read these adventurers from the start will readily remember what a mischievous and practical joker our friend Tommy has always been ever since he was a "kid," and for this reason they will probably follow him and his boon companions to the last.

They will remember his last adventurers, in which he paid off two or three old scores, and the fun that he and his companions had out of it. But the truth is, Tommy and his chum, George Dovey, were always on the look out for sport of some kind or other, and either of them enjoyed mischief and a good laugh better than they did a good meal or the greatest triumph in lessons—although, to tell the truth, these wild mischiefs stood very well in their classes.

One of the sports in which the younger scholars indulged in the most was football, and many a happy, joyous hour did we enjoy at this exciting game.

But in this, as in almost everything else which we took delight in, our old enemy, Pike, the janitor, was forever trying to break up. In fact, he seemed to be soured and envious of the sports which those younger than he could enjoy, and was always doing something or interposing some barrier to prevent as from doing what we had perfect right to do according to the rules of the school.

The common in front of the Theological Seminary, which also belonged to the same institution, was one of the most beautiful foot-ball grounds imaginable, and as there was no law against our making use of it for such a purpose, we proceeded to do so.

But Pike suddenly discovered that we were injuring the turf and grass, although we never attempted to use it until after the grass had been mown, nor, in fact, until cool weather came in the fall, and he forbade our playing upon it.

Of course we paid little or no attention to this, and kept right on with our game every afternoon, and so he waited for a favorable opportunity, and catching the ball when it went outside of the crowd,

he gave it a rousing kick and it collapsed about ten feet above his head.

A madder lot of fellows it would be hard to find, and Pike turned away with a malicious smile on his ugly mug, plainly showing that he had somehow burst our ball on purpose, although he only appeared to kick it in the ordinary way.

"Git out, you old mule," yelled several.

"No wonder it burst; look at those feet. Why, he could burst a cannon ball," said Tommy, and various were the back-handed compliments they flung after him as he turned away.

We gathered mad and sorrowfully around the bursted foot-ball and began to investigate the cause of the accident. But they were not long in finding out. A cut nearly an inch long was discovered, and it was agreed that Pike had some kind of a knife fixed in his boot on purpose to do the contemptible act.

"Oh, the old scoundrel!"
"Let us go and give him darby!"
"Yes, let's go and pound him!"

"Bust his crust!"
"Lay him out!"
"No, hold on," said Tommy Bounce, calmly.
"We can get even with him in a nicer way than that, I'll bet."

"How?" asked a dozen.
"Some of you get a new bladder down at the slaughter-house and have the ball all right again for to-morrow afternoon, and leave, the rest to me, will you?"

"Yes, if we can punish him in any way."

"Well, you leave that to me, will you?"
"Yes, yes," they all responded joyfully.

"Then that settles it, and if we don't make that old herring sick, my name is not Tommy Bounce," said he, and the boys slowly withdrew from the ground with their bursted football.

Pike watched them with a wicked grin on his ugly face.

"That's the way to fix the young torments," he chuckled to himself. "By the time I spoil a half a dozen balls for them, I guess they'll think best to mind me."

After leaving the play-ground, Tommy and Frank Sanborn started on some mysterious errand down to the village, while Dovey and one or two others started for the slaughter-house, some three miles away, for the purpose of getting another bladder for the foot-ball.

Tommy's mischievous eyes sparkled as he and Frank walked away.

"Tell me what you are going to do, Tommy," said his companion.

"I'm going down to the wood-turner's."

"Wood-turner's. What for?"

"To get a wooden ball-turned, about the size of our foot-ball."

"Gracious!"
"After which we will stain it black and then put up a job on friend Pike."

"Yes, but how?"

"Can't you see?"

"I confess that I cannot. I am not so sharp at deviltry as you are," replied Frank.

"Well, I will tell you. Did you notice that he was hidden behind the hedge until the ball came near him? Well, we will manage it to-morrow afternoon so that he will kick the wooden ball instead of the other one."

"Good! good! bully!" exclaimed Frank.

"Can't we make it?"

"I hope so."

"All right, we'll try at all events."

Arriving at the turner's, they had no difficulty in getting the ball turned, and then going to Abbott's furniture-store they got it stained black, after which it looked natural enough to kick.

Wrapping it in an old newspaper, they returned home and began to plot for the successful carrying out of their game.

The next afternoon the boys were all on hand with their new ball, and played several games before Pike discovered them. But keeping a keen watch on him, they saw him steal down behind the hedge again in wait.

"Now, boys, be careful," said Tommy. "Here, Billy," turning to one of the smallest boys, "you take this wooden ball and steal down there on this side of the hedge, and get as close to the opening there as you can; keep your eyes on me, and when I swing my hat you roll the ball past the opening in the hedge."

"All right," said the little fellow, taking the ball.

"Now, then, let us start up this way with the foot-ball, rushing it along, and Frank, you and Dovey go down and keep close to Billy, so as to catch the ball when we kick it that way, and be sure that Pike does not get hold of it."

"All right."

Tommy kicked the foot-ball high in air, and with a wild hurrah they all ran after it, hardly allowing it to strike the ground at all.

Tommy watched the movements, and just before the shouting crowd got near the opening in the hedge, he swung his hat, and little Billy, who had played his part finely, rolled the wooden ball past the opening where Pike stood in waiting for it.

A hungry fish never jumped for a fly quicker than Pike went for that wooden ball.

It lay on the ground some rods in advance of the shouting crowd, and thinking they had kicked it that much ahead of them, he ran out and kicked it with all his might.

The next instant he was doubled up on the

ground like a sick lobster, holding his damaged foot in his hands and howling with pain.

The boys sent up shout after shout that might have been heard three miles away, while the sorely-sold janitor began to comprehend the tremendous joke that had been played upon him.

No sooner had he kicked it than Little Billy caught it up and ran away, while the others gathered around and began to guy poor Pike.

"How do like to kick foot-ball?" asked Tommy.

"Didn't kick it quite so far as you did yesterday, did you?" said Dovey.

"Oh, you young devils!" howled Pike, as he sat on the ground, holding his foot, and rocking backwards and forwards.

"Didn't burst this one, did you, old man?"

"Good strong bladder in that one, eh, Pike?"

"Oh, you rascals!"

"Want another kick at it?"

"Better try one more, just one," said Frank.

"I'd like to kick every mother's son of you."

"Oh, guess not, now; your foot is too sore."

"Ah! but I'll get even with you for this trick. I'll have every one of you expelled from school," said he, as he arose, grunting, from the ground.

"Oh, you go shoot yourself. What business had you to kick the ball, any way?"

"Look out for me, now, I'm bad," said he, limping towards the boarding-house.

"Bad! You always was bad," said one of them.

"He's got a bad hoof on him, at all events," said another.

"Yes, and it came from a bad habit he has of interfering with other people's business," said Tommy.

"Look out for me, Tommy Bounce," he said, turning back and shaking his clenched fist.

"Bet your bottom red I'll look out for you, if you don't look out for yourself," replied Tommy.

"I guess he'll look out before he kicks another football," said Frank Sanborn; whereat they all sent up a triumphant cheer and returned to their football, while their old enemy hobbled out of sight, cursing his luck—the luck which always appeared to attend him whenever he attempted to play any of his mean tricks on Tommy and his friends.

As for Tommy, the boys were so delighted that they caught him upon their shoulders and carried him for several rods. He always had been their leader and champion, but never more so than on this occasion.

The joke was soon known by all the school, and even the professor and teachers found out about it; but the general verdict was, "It served him right."

From that hour Tommy Bounce was held in higher esteem than ever before by the whole school, while Pike, who went lame for a month, was hated more cordially than ever. But there is one thing that may be bet on to a certainty, Janitor Pike never attempted to interfere with our foot-ball again.

To tell the truth, he began to fear us, and we enjoyed more freedom than ever before.

It was only about a week after this little affair before Tommy and his friends had another little bout, in which there was much fun, but this time it was with an outsider.

An old fellow by the name of Pashaw, a one horse farmer, living up towards North Andover, on a few acres of badly-cultivated land, was the victim.

He was a comical old Dick, or he would have been so had he not been such a drunkard. He would come to town with a load of wood or hay, and after selling it, stay around the tavern until he had spent all the money for rum, and then go home in a very elevated and riotous condition, singing and shouting all the way.

It was during the political campaign when Taylor and Fillmore were running, and politics ran very high on all sides.

Pashaw was a loud Taylor man, especially when full of rum, and whenever he could raise any money he was sure to be found at the Washington House, drinking and wrangling over the merits of his candidates.

Late on Saturday evening, Tommy Bounce, George Dovey and Frank Sanborn were down in the village, and passing the tavern they espied Pashaw's old horse and hay wagon standing under the shed.

They knew it at first glance, for they had often seen the old nag and his owner, and enjoyed hearty laughs at the comical figure they cut, especially when Pashaw had more in him than his horse had.

It did not take them long to discover that Pashaw was near at hand, in the bar-room where he was always to be found, and just as loud-mouthed as ever, and so they went in to see the fun.

One of his peculiarities, when drunk, was to imagine himself very rich, and he would talk as though the whole town belonged to him, instead of a small quantity of its worst liquor.

"I'm a man of the people, I am," he was saying as the boys entered. "Dan Webster and I are both men of the people. Dan was up to see me the other day, for you know we are bosom friends, an' says I. 'Dan, you ought to be our next president.' 'Nonsense,' said he, 'you know, "Pa" that I don't want to be bothered with it, I can do better in the cabinet.' 'All right,' says I, 'but Dan, if you want it, I'll get it for you. Money will do it, and I've got the money.' But he laughed it off, asked me to have a drink, and finally made me support Taylor and Fillmore."

"That's how it is, hey?" said some one.

"That's what's the matter with me, I shook hands with Dan and told him he could count on me; that I would spend my time and money just



"Hold on, I'll put on the finishing touches," said Tommy, and in letters as big as your hand he painted on the horse's side, "Pike's Poacher."

"He wanted me to; come, lets have some rum!" he added, going up to the bar.

Two or three of his cronies marched up and suggested to the landlord what they would have, and the black bottles were placed before them.

"Well, now I must be going," he said, for at least the twentieth time that afternoon. "I promised to go up to buy Deacon Green's farm. He offers to sell it cheap for cash, and so I guess I may as well buy it. Of course I have got land enough now, but I want to keep my money going somehow, for what is a citizen worth who holds his money and doesn't help his fellows?"

"You are right, Mr. Pashaw," said the landlord, taking pay for the drinks.

"Of course he is," chimed the bummers who always made it a point to agree with and humor the old fellow in his insane ideas so long as he treated them to rum.

"Of course I am. I gave my wife a thousand dollars the other day to go to Boston and buy dresses and finery for herself and my daughter Julia.

The poor woman hadn't a new calico frock for a year. But he appeared to forget that.

"Yes, I believe in giving the women folks all the finery they want, for they live on such things while we men care nothing about such truck. Why! look at me; see the way I dress; see the old horse I drive; why, people who don't know me would never suspect that I was worth a dollar in the world. Fact—well, well, I thank heaven I am not proud."

At this point the boys withdrew and left the old humbug still blowing about his wealth and the great things he had done or was about to do, while his sucker friends stuck to him and listened as they always did until his money was gone.

"I guess we had better have some sport with the old man," said Tommy as they reached the door.

"So I say. What shall it be?" asked Dovey.

"I don't know. Let's go out to the shed and see his old horse," said he, leading the way.

It was now nearly dark, and as Pashaw's money was nearly all gone he would probably soon be out and make a move towards home.

"I have it," said Tommy, in a whisper.

"What is it?"

"Let's take the old horse out and harness him in, lead towards the wagon."

"Good!" exclaimed both of his companions, springing forward to begin the job.

Silently they worked, and in a few minutes they had taken the old nag out, changed him end forward in the shafts, and then harnessed him to them as

well as they could under the circumstances. But they succeeded in fastening the traces to the ends of the thills in such a way as to enable him to pull the wagon backwards.

"Now let's give the poor old crow some hay," suggested Tommy, after the job was complete.

"Yes, give him something to keep his spirits up for goodness sake."

Going to the barn without being observed they procured a large armful of hay, and greatly to the delight of the half-starved beast they placed it in the forward end of the wagon, where he could reach it without the slightest difficulty. In fact, the old hay wagon made a very good stall rack out of which he could eat and feel as big as a thousand dollar horse.

After this had been all nicely arranged they withdrew to a lot of carts and trumpery that stood huddled together under a large elm tree in front of the tavern, and there secreted themselves to await events, they being entirely out of sight and yet within two or three rods of the house.

They waited there for a half or three quarters of an hour, when Pashaw came staggering out upon the piazza, beastly drunk, and muttering to himself about something.

Then he began to sing:

"Oh, Zacky Taylor is my man,
Bring out yer hosses!
For he did whip the Mexican,
Bring out yer hosses!
He gave 'em fits at Monterey,
Bring out yer hosses!
An' he's the boy to win the day,
Bring out yer hosses!"

He was clinging to one of the piazza columns and singing in a very loud voice. Everybody within a quarter of a mile knew that old Pashaw was drunk, and they had become so used to it that they scarcely noticed it, further than to remark what an old nuisance he was.

"Bring out yer hosses," he yelled, as a finisher, and then swinging clear of the post he staggered towards the shed.

"Guess I better bring out my hosses an' be gettin' home," he soliloquised. "Darker'n thunder. Whoa, Daniel Webster? Where are you?" he asked, calling loudly for his horse.

But Daniel Webster was too busy with his unexpected supper to make any reply, and again he called:

"Whoa, Daniel Webster! Where are you? Don't yer hear me? Don't yer hear yer ole boss whisper-

in' ter yer Dan?" and then he made another move toward him.

"Guess ole Dan's got asleep. Whoa, Dan. Oh, here you are," he added, creeping in beside the animal without discovering how he was harnessed. In fact, it was so dark he could not see him at all.

"Back out, Daniel, back I" he yelled, but Daniel wasn't fixed so as to do it.

"Gosh darn yer, Daniel, why don't er back out?" he again demanded, seizing hold of some part of the harness and pulling back with all his might and main.

At this Daniel concluded he was wanted, and so made a move forward, pushing the hay wagon before him.

"Thash all right, Daniel! Brace up an' we'll have a good ride home."

In truth the old man's getting home at all when drunk depended entirely upon the sagacity of the horse, for he seldom took hold of the reins, but allowed the most sensible of the two brutes to go just as he had a mind to.

"Whoa, Daniel Webster! whoa!" he yelled, after the wagon had been pushed from under the shed far enough as he supposed to get a good start.

With much trouble the old fellow managed at length to tumble himself into the wagon, and then getting upon the seat he gave the word:

"Git ap, Daniel!"

And Daniel started to obey orders, and at the same time to get another mouthful of the hay, which was not all eaten yet.

"Whoa! What the devil are you doing? Whoa, I say!" and the horse obeyed, after pushing the wagon back a rod or two; "wasser matter wiz you anyhow, Daniel; drunk? Guessher are, Dan, yer ole fool. Now 'have yourself. Git ap, now."

The poor old horse attempted to "git ap," but with the same result as before.

"Whoa! you drunken beast," he yelled, for by this time he had backed or pushed the wagon against the pump and spilled the old man into the watering-trough.

"Murder! murder! Whoa! eugh!" he yelled as he began swashing around in the water.

The cry of murder and the general riot brought the crowd from the tavern with lanterns.

"Hello! what's the matter here?" asked the landlord.

"Murder! whoa! Help! help! Ramrod! ramrod, come here, quick!" cried Pashaw, crawling out of the trough, dripping like a drowned rat.

"Here I am. What is it?" asked the landlord approaching nearer.

"Oh, Ramrod, what's ye matter?" asked the thoroughly-frightened wretch.

"That's what I would like to know."

The crowd gathered around.

"What's the matter with your horse?" asked the landlord, holding his lantern up to the horse's head.

"He's drunk, I guess."

But the ducking had sobered Pashaw to a great degree, and when he caught sight of his horse and heard the shouts of laughter, he was quite as much confused as he could well be.

"Thunder an' gun! Wha'zer matter wiz Daniel?"

"You've got him in wrong end to."

Pashaw scratched his head while the second laugh was being indulged in, during which, also, Tommy and his friends withdrew from their hiding-place.

"Be I drunk, or is Daniel?" he finally asked.

"Guess somebody has been playing a trick on you," suggested the landlord.

"Impossible, impossible."

"It looks like it, anyhow."

The men took hold and soon had the horse harnessed in properly, after which they assisted the dripping victim into the wagon and handed him the reins.

Pashaw was silent and evidently indignant. In fact, he could scarcely make head or tail to the affair, only he knew that he had been dumped into the watering-trough without ceremony, and water being naturally distasteful to him, it made him madder than he would have been had the trough contained rum instead of water.

"Well, now you are all right, old man. Drive on," said the landlord.

"Landlord, somebody has played a trick on me, an' I'll give ten thousand dollars to find out who it was. In fact, I'll give you power of attorney, in the presence of these gentlemen as witnesses, to offer a reward of ten thousand dollars for the discovery of the guilty wretches."

"All right, I'll do it. Good night."

"The presumptuous rascals, to dare to do such a thing to me," he muttered, as he drove away towards home, leaving his friends to have their laugh out at his expense.

But it learned him a good lesson, for he afterwards drank less rum and spent more money for the benefit of his family.

Tommy and his friends started for home just as full of fun and laughter as they could hold, while the landlord, after having his laugh out, fell to speculating about who played the trick.

"I wouldn't wonder a bit if it was those Academy boys that were in here a little while ago," said he.

"Sure enough, for one of them was that devil's kid, Tommy Bounce," said one of the crowd.

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE is no doubt but that our hero, Tommy Bounce, is pretty well known to the reader by this time.

One thing is certain, he was well known both in and out of school at Andover; for, before he had been there a year he enjoyed the reputation of being the prince of mischief-makers, and whenever deviltry was cut up, Tommy was sure of being accused of being the author of it, whether he was guilty or not.

But having so many friends as he had among the scholars he was comparatively safe from exposure, for they were true as steel to him, and would swear him out of almost any scrape he was found out in.

Yet such a thing as his being found out at all was a rarity, for he was as sly as a cat, and covered up his tracks as quickly as he made them.

The last record of his was the trick he and his chum, Dovey, played on old Pashaw.

The landlord suspected that Tommy had done the mischief; but it was such a comical affair that every body laughed over it, and so no move was made to find out for certain whether he did it or not; in fact, the most of his pranks were so funny that they created laughter instead of anger, which healed up the wounds.

Not a great while after this affair he played one of the most laughable tricks on that dear, good old gentleman, Professor Taylor, the head of the school.

If there was anything in the world that the old chap detested, it was cats. At night, when one or two of them attempted to serenade him, he would go almost into fits over the music, and give his old servant no peace until she hunted them off the premises.

Tommy was not slow in finding out this little weakness of the old man's, and so he resolved on getting some sport out of it if he could.

Taking some half-dozen of the others into his confidence, they went to work hatching up the game, which it required quite a while to do.

The first thing they did was to capture a cat, kill and skin it, and then carefully stuff it. When this was completed the old Thomas cat looked quite natural.

"There," said Tommy, after they had finished, "I don't think the old pussy ought to feel so very bad at the way we have treated him."

"Why not?" asked his friends.

"Because he looks as natural as ever, and is as ~~as~~ as ever he was in his life."

"Well, he isn't complaining, is he?" asked Dovey, whereat they all laughed.

"No; but after all he isn't as good as a singed cat," replied Tommy.

"How do you make that out?"

"Because a singed cat is better than it looks, while this one isn't as good as he looks."

"That's a fact."

"Well, now, what next?"

"This," said Tommy, running a long pole through the stuffed cat, so that it was impaled or poised on one end of it.

"Now, what?" they asked.

Tommy consulted his watch.

"Just nine o'clock," said he.

"Yes; the bell of the 'Old South Church,' has this moment begun to ring," said Frank Sanborn.

"Yes; lights out, according to rules," said Tommy taking up his hat. "Come, follow me;" and putting out the light, they stole softly from the room and out of doors.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, and the music of the old church bell came up from the village below, that same old bell that had called us so often to church and from our own play in the evening.

Acting under Tommy's instructions we all followed silently along through a back street for half a mile or so, until we came opposite the rear of the professor's garden; then, climbing a fence, we stole cautiously over the intervening fence and halted in the shade of a high board fence which stood two rods or so from the back of his house.

The old gentleman's study was situated on the rear of his house, overlooking this garden and this very fence. The shrubbery and trees shut us out completely and we could not be seen from the road or the houses on either side.

Here we began a cat concert, and such a catawauling was never heard. In fact, so well was it done that anybody in the world would have thought that all the cats in the neighborhood had assembled especially to give the professor a regular serenade.

So he thought. Before we had given a dozen yowls, up went his bed-room window and out came his night-capped head.

"Scat!" he yelled, "Scat, you vipers!"

Then we gave him an extra and prolonged yowl.

"Scat, scat, scat! clear out, you four-legged devils. Scat!" he yelled again.

But we didn't "scat" worth a cent; on the contrary we gave it to him again.

Then he disappeared for a moment, but soon returned and hurled a boot-jack out against the fence behind which we were.

At this we became silent for a moment, and thinking he had driven his tormentors away he was about retiring when Tommy started again a solo mew-wow-wow, which the others soon took up, and again the old man was in torment.

"Scat, or I'll murder every one of you," he hissed, as he came to the window.

But of course that didn't make matters any better, and, in truth, a little worse.

The old man was getting wild, and after hurling several ink bottles, old books, blacking bottles, and the like against the fence, we heard him calling to his servant.

"Bridget! Bridget! Have you retired? Do you hear those dreadful cats?"

"Faith I do, sur. Phat ails them?" she asked.

"They want killing."

"Sure, I think their voices want grasin', they squeak so."

"You go out and drive them away, Bridget."

"So I will, sur," said she.

In a few moments we saw her coming out of the back door, armed with a broom.

"Now where are ye, ye whinin' divils? Come hither till I'd knock the singin' out o' ye, ye spaleens. Come fornist me now!" she added, coming nearer.

As she approached, the mewing and spitting gradually ceased, and Tommy held up his stuffed cat on the end of the pole, so that it appeared to be standing on the top of the fence.

"Whist out o' that!" cried Biddy, pausing to see if she would get sight of any of the supposed cat. "Och, it's mighty clever ye are now when I'm around, Where are ye?"

Just then she caught sight of the stuffed cat, with back and tail erect.

"Howly Moses, but there's one of them!" said she, "Only luck at it? Be jabers, but it's spoilin' for a fight, so it is," she added, half admiringly.

Just then Tommy gave a yowl.

"Wait, now, jist till I'd get a whack at ye wid dis broom," said she, creeping cautiously up.

"Och, but won't I knock the stuffin' out o' that grimalkin?" she said, drawing back with her broom, but suddenly pausing to spit on her hands.

Tommy was watching for her through a crack in the fence, while the others were stationed at other cracks, and were doing their best to keep from laughing.

"Now, then," said she, swinging back her broom and making a tremendous blow at the cat.

Just as she struck, Tommy pulled the cat down, and there was nothing to strike, so her broom almost flew out of her hand with the force of the blow.

For an instant she stood like a person who is uncertain whether they had seen what they thought they had, or not.

"I wonder did I hutit?" she mused. "Faix, I seed it there as plain as I see my broom. Be jabers,

that beast is an iugant dodger, anyway, I'll say that for him."

She was about to turn away, when Tommy made a little meow and again hoisted the cat as before.

Bridget again faced the music, and seeing the cat in the same position, she was mad.

"Are ye there agin, ye humpbacked hathen, ye? Faix, but if ye dodge me this time, ye'll have to be smarter than I think you are. Ha!" she said, and she aimed another blow at the cat.

But, as before, the beast disappeared before her broom reached it, and this utterly nonplussed her. What to make of it she did not know.

"Am I drunk, I dunno?" she muttered to herself. "Faix, but there must be somethin' the matter wid me, or that's the devil's own cat. There it was agin an' me a whackin' at it like lightnin', and it disappears like the shakin' of a sheep's tail. Begob, if it comes agin I'll thwack it, or I'll thwack myself for a fool," she muttered, again spitting on her hands and making ready.

For a moment all was still. Then one of the other boys gave a mournful wail a few yards away.

"Oh, it's there ye are, eh?" said she, moving towards the spot where the sound came from. "Come out o' that now, or be the powers I'll make ye go lame for the rest o' yer life, so I will."

At this the boys nearly roared.

She began poking among some gooseberry bushes that grew by the fence, hoping undoubtedly to hunt out the feline offender.

Just then Tommy uttered another catawaul and raised his stuffed animal as before.

Biddy was not long in discovering it, and grasping her broom firmly again went to thwack her tormentor.

"Oh, ye devil's baste, wait'll I get a bit nearer—I—I!"

She was on the point of hitting at it again with her broom, when Tommy twirled the pole in his hand, causing the cat to spin round in the most mysterious and diabolical manner.

Biddy paused, dropped her broom, watched it for an instant, and then ran back to the house as though the very old boy was after her.

"Murder! murder! murder!" she cried.

The old professor met her at the door.

"What is it, Bridget?" he asked, anxiously.

"It's the devil, Mister Taylor, the very devil," she cried excitedly.

"Nonsense; what has frightened you?"

"Oh, holy Moses, but if it wasn't the devil, what the devil was it?"

"Explain yourself, Bridget. What is it?"

"How should I know, sur? But it was a cat wid his back an' tail up, a-yowlin' an' a-howlin', an' a-spittin' fire the most you ever seen, an' I raised up my broom to cuff him wid it, when he cried ~~to~~ haw, an' run away then."

"What nonsense is this?"

"Devil a bit of nonsense at all, at all is it. Sure, I hit it at it wid my broom, but it vanished like a ghost, an' devil a thing I hit bat the fence. Then it comed back again, an' I went for to box him agin', an' he did the same, an' so did I, be gob, the very same. Presently back it came agin, an' when I thought to thwack it, it began to fly round an' round like the ould button on the woodshed dure, so it did; faith an' that's what frightened me."

"Nonsense, Bridget, you imagine that it did all this, but of course nothing of the kind happened. Come with me and let's see what the trouble is," said he, starting towards the fence.

"Devil a onct," replied the woman, firmly, at the same time crossing herself devoutly.

"What is that you say?"

"Wouldn't go there agin', Mister Taylor for all the gould in Andover, so I wouldn't."

"Nonsense! come along."

"I won't, then."

"There is nothing to fear."

"Then phat do yees want me to go wid yees for? I'll not go," she added, resolutely.

"I wish to convince you that you have been made a fool of," said he, coaxingly.

"Well, if I have, I'll not be doin' it agin."

Just then the boys began their mewling again, and the old man pulled up a bean-pole, and started for the scene of action.

"Yees betther come back, Mister Taylor, for they're the devil's own cats, I'm sure," she called.

But he was mad, and meant war.

When he arrived at the fence all was still again, and he began to poke among the bushes.

"Scat out of this, you plagues! If I get a blow at any of you, it will be a night long to be remembered, I can assure you of that."

"Mew-mew-yew!" came from Tommy, and on turning around, the professor saw the same cat that had so bothered and frightened his servant.

"Oh, you villain! Oh, you!"

He made a strike at the stuffed cat, but it vanished like a shadow. He stood a moment in surprise and astonishment, and then he scratched his head and looked around in a foolish sort of a way.

Glancing up again, the cat was once more in its place, and again he struck at it. This time Tommy whirled it around as before, while the boys set up a howl that fairly made the old man's hair stand on end.

He wasn't much of a coward, but this sight and the accompanying noises rather got the best of the old man's nerves, and so he gradually sauntered back to the



There was a loud report, and the old man tumbled heels over head under a table.

trembled somewhat; "I'll try what virtue there is in that."

"Begob, but shot won't kill 'em," said Bridget, holding up her hands.

"Do as I bid you. Never mind; I'll go up and fire from my study window," said he, going into the house.

The boys did not fail to hear this, and knowing that the old fellow was as good as his word, they lost no time in getting away, lest a stray shot might reach them through the fence.

But, before doing so, Tommy threw the pole and stuffed cat over the fence into the garden.

As good as his word, the enraged professor took his shot-gun, which he had bought and loaded a year ago for the express purpose of killing the cats, and pointing it in the direction of the fence, he shut his eyes and pulled the trigger.

There was a loud report, a scattering of shot among the branches of the trees, and the old man tumbled heels over head under a table that stood in the center of the room. That gun kicked.

The table was upset, and a large bottle of ink happened to spill itself all over the poor old fellow's head, and he howled with pain.

Bridget rushed to the room in a fright.

"Are ye kilt, sure!"

"Pretty nearly I guess. Help me up!" said he, trying to get out of the mess.

"Och! murther! Look at yerself!" said she, pointing to his blackened head, face and clothes.

"Oh, dear! Help me."

She helped him to his feet.

"Phat happened ye, sur?"

"The—the gun kicked."

"The gun! Faix, I should think a mule had done the kickin'. I wonder did ye kill a cat?"

"Oh, never mind. Go to bed," said he, waving her from the room.

A bath was the only thing that would remove the ink, but he had to apply another of liniment to soothe the many bruises which he had received, and it was nearly midnight before he got all fixed up and his ruffled temper toned down so that he could go to bed.

As for the boys, they lost no time in getting to their rooms; but the laugh and the sport which they had enjoyed paid them well for their trouble.

Late the next morning Mr. Taylor rose stiff and much the worse for what had happened him, but he concluded to go out and see what execution his shot had done with his tormentors.

Bridget followed cautiously behind, for she did not care to get very close to the spot where she felt

sure she had seen an imp of the evil one the night before.

After glancing around, the gardener joined him, probably thinking he had some directions to give.

"I shot at some cats here last night, and I am just looking to see what the effect was," said he.

"Oh, never expect to kill a cat, professor," said the gardener. "At all events it will take nine shots to finish one, for they have nine lives, you know."

"No, sir, I know nothing of the kind. Ah!" he exclaimed, as he came upon the stuffed cat which Tommy had thrown over the fence. "Don't tell me that I cannot kill a cat; look here!"

"Gracious! You did kill one, didn't you?" said the man, going along and taking it up.

"Ah! what is this?"

They both stood looking at the cat on the end of the pole.

"How could that have happened, I wonder?"

"Gracious! When you shot it it must have bounded into the air and come down on this bean pole. Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Nobody. Let's look closer."

The old gentleman put on his glasses and at the same moment they discovered that it was a stuffed cat and that a trick had been played upon him the night before.

Mr. Taylor was rather a cool, somewhat meek man, but this upset him very much.

"I am astonished," he mused.

"Who could have done it?"

"Ah, some of those mischievous boys, I suppose."

"Oh, they are a bad lot, sir, suggested the gardener, shaking his head.

"Throw it away, John, and say nothing about it to anyone; I may yet find out who the miscreants are."

"I shall obey you, sir, and hope you will find out who did it."

"I shall try, you may well believe," said he, with much firmness.

"Did ye kill a cat?" asked Bridget, still at a distance from where they stood.

"Well, Bridget, there is certainly one less cat in the world than there was. But you may say nothing about it," he added, as they turned away.

Bridget's curiosity was now aroused, and she came close to where the gardener stood.

"Where is it?" she asked.

"There," said he, pointing to it.

"Bad luck ter it. It nearly frightened the wits out o' me last night, so it did."

"How?"

She related her experience.

The gardener laughed, and taking up the pole with the cat elevated above his head, he whirled it around and illustrated, as he supposed, and, in fact, as it really was, the way the startling conduct of the cat had been brought about.

Bridget watched him with open mouth and eyes.

"And was that how it was?"

"I think so."

"And it wasn't a cat at all, at all."

"Only a stuffed one."

"An' who did it?"

"Some of the students, most likely."

"Where wur they?" continued Biddy, still unable to understand how the game was played.

The gardener explained it again.

"An' they was outside of the fence?"

"Of course."

"An' did it for a joke?"

"To be sure."

"Well, by the mother that used to spank me in ould Ireland, I'd loike ter catch the lads as did it, that's all," said she, spanking her big broad hands together with a whack. "Faix, I'd fix 'em so they couldn't sit down for a month, so I would, the young blackguardly rascallions."

"They deserve it."

"Deserve it! Bad luck ter 'em, ter be after makin' cats o' themselves an' disturbin' the pace o' decent people. Sure, the professor nearly broke his neck, an' I nearly broke my hearl wid bein' scared to death, so I did. Oh, but let me lay hands on 'em."

And illustrating how she would warm them, she returned to her work, while the gardener buried the stuffed cat, and yet while doing so a broad grin spread itself over his face, as he thought of the comical trick, and of the time when he was such a boy himself.

But the authors of the joke were never found out, although, as usual, Tommy was very strongly suspected.

One Saturday afternoon Tommy went with Harry White to spend the afternoon and the following Sunday with him at his father's house in Lawrence, about seven miles away.

Harry had a sister who had a beau, and he disliked him very much, and on this occasion they resolved to play a joke on him.

A neighbor, living not far away, had a large, savage-looking wooden dog that had been carved out by a sailor somewhere, and it was painted true to nature, and kept on the lawn under a large tree.

This they borrowed, the family being away, and

secreted it, they waited until about dusk the next evening, and then placed it right in the path leading up to the house, just about ten feet inside of the gate, and where this beau would see it the moment he approached.

And he did see it, and stopped just as he was on the point of opening the gate. Tommy and Harry were hidden in the shrubbery enjoying the fun, for fun it was to see that cowardly booby stand there afraid of a wooden dog.

"Here, doggy," he called, after standing there a few minutes. "Good old fellow! come here!" he added, snapping his fingers encouragingly.

But that ferocious-looking dog paid no attention to his endeavors to make friends, and there he stood, afraid to venture in to see his girl.

Finally, he walked away, hoping that the dog would change his quarters, but no, there he was when he returned, looking as savage as ever.

He waited and watched around for some time hoping that somebody would come down the path or that something would happen, but nothing changed and he finally returned home, wrote a note to the young lady, and claimed that sickness had prevented him from going to see her the night before, but he never mentioned the dog.

The boys carried it back again that night after it had served its purpose, and then Harry told his sister all about the joke.

She was just a little mad at first, but when she came to think what a cowardly pup the fellow must be, and then to lie about being sick, she resolved to make him "sick" in earnest by giving him the sack, which she did, greatly to Harry's delight.

But that lover was mad enough to club himself when he learned the trick.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I SHALL never forget the sport we had at the expense of a city fop from Boston, who came to Andover to see a young lady, who was attending school at the Abbott Academy.

It was her first term there, and as she came dressed in the bang-up height of fashion and put on a great many airs with her good looks, she very naturally created quite a sensation, and soon had several of the students on a high old swing.

This was all very well while it caused only a rivalry among the students, but after a month or so this Boston fop put in an appearance, and it soon became known that he was her beau, and of course the whole crowd of her admirers turned against him.

Tommy Bounce took no interest in the matter, further than a prospect of fun might present itself, but when this outside lover made his appearance he at once sided with the students against him.

They took long walks, and seemed to enjoy the sensation they created, and while the older fellows and admirers of Miss Weldon were wishing that they could punch the head of her beau, Tommy Bounce was watching for an opportunity to play some joke on him.

That opportunity was not long in presenting itself, and he was not slow as usual in mastering and making the most of it. Taking George Dovey and about half a dozen fellows into his confidence, he proceeded to explain.

"I was down to the livery stable just now, and this Boston chap came in to hire a horse and buggy for this afternoon to take Miss Weldon out for a ride."

"And this is Saturday afternoon—no school; which way is he going?" asked Frank Sanborn.

"To Ballardvale," said Tommy. "I heard him ask old Pray all about it; how far it was; what road to take, and all about it."

"Good! Let's go and tell the fellows. We can hide in the bushes 'long side of the road and when he drives along, jump out, frighten the horse, make him run away and smash things so he will have to pay for them. Oh, bully!" said Frank.

"Oh, bosh!" said Tommy.

"Yes," put in Dovey.

"Why?"

"Because we might break his own or her neck, and that mischief couldn't be paid for very well."

"That is so, Tommy."

"Well, what shall we do? We can't afford to let them go out and not have any fun."

"I have it!"

"Let's see it."

"Let's tell all the big fellows, and they'll all hire carriages and follow them."

"Yes; I'm sure we can have lots of sport."

"And give ourselves away; nonsense. If we should do anything like that we should be sure to get found out, and a muss will follow."

"Well, what have you to suggest?"

"I have an idea, and if you will all agree to follow my lead, we'll have some quiet fun, and be in no danger of getting found out."

"We'll agree to it," said the whole party.

"Good enough. Now he made arrangements to have the team driven to his door at two o'clock; it is now one, and we have just about time enough to fix things. We want two hammers and some nails."

"Hammer and nails! what the devil do we want with them?" asked several.

"I'll tell you, as we go along, come, let us fly around."

"All right; I know where there is one hammer," said Frank Sanborn.

"And I know where there is another," said Dovey.

"Bully! I'll get the nails," said our hero.

In a few minutes everything was arranged, and the party got out on the old turnpike road leading towards the pretty little village of Ballardvale.

"Now, then, I'll tell you all about it," said Tommy, after they had got started.

"Go ahead."

"Now this Boston chap is a stranger here and so is his girl. All right. He was very particular in asking old Pray all about the way, and he drew a map of the roads with a piece of chalk on the stable floor telling just how far he must go this way and that; just where he would find the guide-board that would point him the way he was to take."

"Yes, but?"

"Hold your horses, will you?"

"I wish I had some to hold," replied the fellow that had interrupted him.

"Well, you all know where the roads fork down here?"

"Yes, and there is a guide-board there."

"Exactly. Well, one road leads to Ballardvale, and the other takes a sweep around and leads back to town again by another way."

"Yes, we know it."

"Well, come to think of it, we don't want but one hammer after all," he mused.

"We can kill a skunk or something with the other," suggested Dovey.

"Well, as I was saying, we will change this guide-board so that it will point him down this road that will take him back to Andover again, that's all there is to it."

"All! Well, by gracious, that is quite enough. I'm sure we shall have lots of fun out of it."

"Yes, but I have forgotten one thing."

"What is it, Tommy?"

"We ought to have posted the fellows so they could have been down to the tavern to give them a cheer when they arrive back."

"That's so," said several.

"I'll go back and tell 'em," said Joe Worden.

"Will you, Joey?" asked Tommy, earnestly.

"Of course I will."

"Good enough. Tell Fowler, Boyd, Hoey, Wynnatt, Burgess, Martin, and a few others who won't blab it and tell them of the trick we are going to play, and tell them to go down to the Washington House and give them a cheer when they return."

"All right," and away sped Joe back to the gymnasium, where he knew the fellows were.

"Now, then, come on," said Tommy, again starting forward briskly.

With a suppressed cheer they followed.

In the course of ten minutes we reached the fork of the roads, and without loss of time knocked the finger board from the post and fastened it temporarily in a position pointing down the road which passed an old saw mill that stood on Black River, and so on back to the lower portion of South Andover again, and to within half a mile of the place from which our victims were to set out.

This arranged, we betook ourselves to the bushes which lined the road, there to await events.

Presently we heard the rumbling of carriage wheels, but the rattle which accompanied it soon convinced us that it was not the buggy of our proposed victims.

The next thing we heard was some wild singing, and pretty soon we saw an old chap sitting on a box wagon, something like a dog-cart, drunk as a fiddler's female canine, driving along regardless of everything.

Arriving near the guide-post, he looked up at it, then pulled up his old horse. He looked at it again, first with both eyes, then he closed one of them and squinted with the other.

"Hic—ole man—hic—guess that last drink was too much for you, either I'm turned round or that ole guide board is." Then he read: "Ballardvale, six miles." Guess I'm drunk, it was all right yesterday—hic—so was I. Guess I'll let Nancy boss the job; she's sober's a cow. G'lang, Nancy!"

The old fellow was right. The horse did know more than he did, for the moment he told her to go, she started straight down the right road without regard to the guide board.

We had a good laugh over this little bit of unexpected fun, but as it was nearly time for our Boston friend to come along, we laid low and listened, while Dovey climbed a tree near by, the better to enable him to see when he should appear in sight.

In about ten minutes he came down and informed us that the buggy was in sight.

Without loss of time we got into the bushes close by the road and waited. But the time seemed so long, and when they came in view it became evident why it seemed so.

The horse was walking, and it is a well-known fact that livery stable horses delight in such a gait, while the Boston Adonis had his arm around the waist of his Venus and was sampling her lips quite freely.

"He's biting her!" said Frank Miller.

"Ah! I guess she'll never scream on account of that biting," said Dovey.

"Hush! They are getting near and may overhear us," said Tommy.

In an instant everything was hushed.

The horse came moping along; the reins had fallen upon the dasher and were hung carelessly over the driver's arm, and just before reaching the

guide post he actually stopped and began to browse the leaves from the bushes that grew by the roadside. But the lovers scarcely noticed this, so interested were they in each other, but kept right on billing and cooing.

"My darling Nell, let us get married!" said he, clasping her in his arms.

"Oh, no! I daren't. Why, Ducky dear, what an idea! Oh, you naughty, naughty man!"

"But you love me?"

"Why, yes, to be sure, but?"

"Well, if you love me, why not go and get married?" he asked, earnestly.

"But what would our folks—what would everybody say?" she asked.

"Ah, but no one shall know it for the present, and not until you graduate. I shall return to Boston in the morning and nobody will know it until we see fit to let them."

"But people here would know it."

"No; we will find a minister in Ballardvale, and he shall marry us, I assure you, Nell, that nobody will know it. Will you? We will drive right down there this afternoon, have the knot tied, and return without a suspicion. Say yes, Nell, darling."

"Nell, darling" evidently said yes, although we did not hear her, for he caught her again in his arms, gave her a rousing kiss and then drew up the reins, and choked the horse off from his roadside grubbing.

"Let me see," said he, glancing up at the guide board, "Ballardvale six miles; so, this is the guide post the stable keeper spoke of, and we must follow the way it points. Go 'long."

In two minutes they were out of sight, and we came from the bushes where we had been concealed, laughing ready to split.

"Better than we thought," said Dovey.

"Yes, yes, an elopement spoiled."

"All of which goes to show that we have done just right," said Tommy, looking sober.

"Why, the friends of Miss Weldon should forever be grateful to us," said Frank.

"And the Faculty?"

"And the Abbott Academy."

"And all the fellows in school."

"Well, now let us replace the guide-board and then hurry back to town and see the end of the sport," said Tommy.

This was soon accomplished, and with a loud shout we started to return.

What fun we had on our way back, but we kept up a pretty lively trot for fear we should be too late.

But if we had only stopped to think, we might have known that we had plenty of time, since the loving elopers were in no hurry.

At all events we got back and reached the tavern where a dozen or more of the fellows were congregated in waiting, and to them we told the whole story, creating much merriment and excitement.

In fact, the secret was not kept with the students, for in less than fifteen minutes a hundred people knew of the joke and were standing around waiting for the lovers to arrive.

In the course of half an hour after Tommy and his friends arrived, the carriage containing the happy couple drove around the corner of the hotel, where it appears the Boston chap had concluded to call and inquire for a minister.

But the moment he turned the corner, where the crowd was assembled, a shout went up that astonished them, followed by laughter and gibing that neither could account for. She was frightened and he nonplussed.

"Welcome to Ballardvale!" shouted one.

"Want a minister?" cried another.

"Sweet Nell, let us get married!"

"How are you, guide-post?"

"How are you, Ballardvale?"

"Go get married; nobody will ever know it."

"Sweet Nell, I'm going back to Boston in the morning."

"Kiss me, again, George!" and a hundred different cries greeted them from all sides, and then three rousing cheers and a school "tiger" were given.

The chap from Boston could not understand it, of course, for how did the people of Ballardvale, as he supposed them to be, know about his little arrangement, and why were they so enthusiastic over it? But he concluded that something was wrong, and at the eager solicitation of his companion he whipped the horse and attempted to get clear of the crowd.

But they yelled "whoa" to the horse so loudly that he stopped, and when the whip was again applied, and he started forward, he chanced to be headed towards his stable, and who ever knew a livery horse who wouldn't go home without much urging?

This one was not an exception, so he put ahead at a rattling pace and soon left the fellows behind.

But that was not making matters any better, for the moment the horse reached the stable he turned and dashed in, despite of all the driver could do.

The Irish stableman stood ready to receive him, although somewhat surprised to see the team back so soon and a lady seated in the carriage.

"Are ye back?" asked the hostler.

"What—what place is this?" asked the Boston lover, gazing around.

"Why, it's Mr. Pray's stable."

"And pray, who is Mr. Pray?"



"Welcome to Ballardvale!" the boys shouted as they turned around the corner of the hotel.

"The owner of this team, to be sure."

"Why, how the dickens is this? What town is this anyway?"

"Andover, to be sure. Are ye crazy?"

"I guess I am, I thought it was Ballardvale. How in the name of mischief does it happen that we are back again where we started from?"

"Divil a onct do I know, faith. But here comes Mr. Pray, perhaps he'll know."

The old constable came waddling from his house. The situation was soon explained, and he was asked for his opinion.

"Well, you must have taken the wrong road and came back by the old mill," said Pray.

"But I followed your instructions, and when I reached the first guide-post I took the road pointed out."

"Impossible."

"Oh, yes he did," said the bewildered girl.

"Well, then the thing must have turned around, that's all I can say."

"And this crowd of students down here at the tavern—what does that mean?"

"I'm sure I can't tell."

"They yelled at me in the most insulting manner."

"Perhaps they have played a trick on you in some way. They are always up to all sorts of devil-trum," said Pray, who knew from bitter experience all about it.

Boston and his lady-love exchanged glances.

"Let me go home," said she.

And as he felt very much like doing the same thing, he got out of the buggy and assisted her to alight.

Paying for the team, he offered his arm to his crestfallen companion, and they started to leave the stable.

"The funniest thing I ever heard of," said he.

"I'm sure the students have played some trick upon us," said she.

Just then they came out into the street, and even a larger crowd awaited them than they had met at the tavern, and again they sent up cheers and asked tenderly if they wished for a minister, and how they liked "Ballardvale."

Two sicker and more foolish looking people were never seen. They lost no time in getting away from that crowd, and in retiring from the public gaze.

He returned to Boston by the first train the next morning, and she kept out of sight for a month. But it broke up that very foolish marriage, and as he turned out to be a worthless fellow, she lived to thank Tommy Bounce and his friends, after she

had learned all about the trick, for doing what they did.

The joke became known far and wide at the time, and added another bell to the cap of our mischievous hero.

But while speaking of tricks on lovers, I may as well tell of another which Tommy played upon a spoony student not long after.

This fellow "had 'em bad" with a young lady residing in Andover. She returned his love, but her father, being a good judge of human nature, looked upon him as a nincompoop and not able to take care of himself, let alone a wife.

But Gray was a persistent fellow, and in spite of the old man's objections he continued to visit the daughter.

He kicked him out of the house one night, but he went back again the next night.

At length the old fellow got the rheumatism so bad that he couldn't kick him, neither could he keep watch of his movements, so he bought a savage dog to do it for him.

He would lock his daughter into her room and leave the front of the house to the dog.

Tommy and his friends were not long in finding out how matters stood, for they appeared to snuff mischief in the air.

It so fell out that the old man got so bad with the rheumatism that he could not leave the house. All he could do was to lock his girl up at night, but he could not get out to the dog's kennel to let him loose, and no one else dared go near the beast, so savage was he.

Gray was not slow to find this fact out, and he took advantage of it as best he could.

Right in front of the chamber where his beloved was confined grew a large apple tree, and by climbing up nearly to the top he could sit there on one of the limbs and hold sweet converse with her, and almost touch hands.

He passed several hours there the first night that the dog remained chained, and although he could hear him growling savagely at the end of his rope, as he stood braced against the tree, he felt himself safe and continued his courting.

The second night he found that the man he would make a father-in-law of, was still unable to leave the house to let the dog loose, so a little after dark he sneaked into the garden and waited until his girl was again locked into her room.

Tommy Bounce and his friends appeared on the scene soon afterwards, and began to study how they could get the watch-dog loose.

The kennel stood close to the fence. The dog had scented the trespassers and stood growling and

straining at the rope with which he was tied, positively hungry to serve his master.

But the boys knew very well that if they got over the fence to untie him that he was just as likely to bite them as he was to go for Gray; so they thought and tried to contrive some way to do it without getting chawed up themselves.

Finally, Tommy went round by the barn and there he found a scythe hanging in the crotch of a tree. Securing this he returned to his friends, who were on the fence overlooking the kennel.

"I guess I have it," said he, mounting the fence.

The dog turned upon him and snarled in a very loving way. He pranced around as far as his rope would let him, showing a set of teeth that never would need a dentist, and his growls and whining became a pathetic appeal for Tommy to come down and be chawed up.

But Tommy watched his opportunity, and when the dog jumped around in another direction he made a clip at the rope with his scythe and severed it at a blow.

If ever there was a thankful dog that was one, but as neither of them cared to shake hands with him, they got down and went around by the front of the house to see what he would do.

It didn't take them long to find out. That was a good dog and evidently knew his business, and without loss of time he posted himself under that apple tree and sent up a warning growl.

"Oh, Lord!" moaned Gray. "Miranda, here is that infernal dog! What shall I do?"

At that moment he heard a loud laugh in the street, and another from her father's room, and the dog uttered a growl as much as to say, "I am watching him, old man."

"Oh, 'Dolphus I isn't it dreadful?" she moaned.

"Oh, dear, I should say so!" was his return whine.

The boys watched and laughed, and called out to the poor devil up the tree for two hours or more, and then returned to their rooms, leaving him still "up a tree" in a very sad sense.

He got down on the lower limb of the tree to see if the dog really meant business, but he very soon learned that he did, and so he got back again as high up as possible, and remained there all night.

When morning came he was still shivering there on his roost, and the dog was sleeping under it with one eye open. Dozens of students went round that way as they went to prayers and viewed him in his sad plight, but still he dared not come down.

About nine o'clock the old man hobbled to the door, and after making him take his oath that he would never come around his house again after his

daughter, he called off the dog and allowed the poor spoony to get down. He kept his word, for the next day he left school and never returned. And so Tommy Bounce and his mischief produced two good results.

CHAPTER XIX.

TOMMY BOUNCE being pretty well known by this time, we can get along without using a portion of our space for an introduction.

This part of his life embraces several of his funny tricks, one of which he played upon a young man from Boston.

This fellow was a freshman at school, and on account of his many airs he put on, he very soon became unpopular with the scholars. He was a great brag; he landed lately from London, where he pretended his family was very wealthy and aristocratic.

There wasn't the slightest doubt of his being an Englishman, and a cockney one at that, for in half-an-hour's conversation he would drop "h's" enough to make a dictionary of, and although there was a certain kind of smart about him, yet he was very green in many things.

Tommy played several little jokes on him, and was chief inquisitor at the hazing of Mr. Brown, which took place very soon after his arrival at Andover. We give it to him rough, and he "kicked," but kicking didn't save him."

He was sharp enough to find out that Tommy Bounce was the leader in everything chivalrous or mischievous, and the next morning after he had received his "hazing" he sought him, and although a much larger and older fellow, tried to learn a few school ropes.

"Hi say, Tommy, my lad, hi wants ter chat with yer a bit," said he.

"With me?" asked our hero, looking up in honest surprise.

"Why not, lad?" he asked, drawing nearer.

Tommy had assisted in roasting him so badly the night before that he at first suspected that he wished to warm him a bit in return; but on the contrary he very soon learned that Brown was on the very best terms with himself and the whole school.

The truth was, he had often heard how the students of different schools hazed nearly every freshman who came, and he rather looked upon it as an honor than otherwise.

"Yes, Tommy, lad, you gave it to me jolly last night, didn't you?"

"Me? I gave it to you, Mr. Brown? I fail to catch your meaning," said Tommy.

Brown was staggered a trifle by the cool and innocent face of our hero, as he replied, but he soon recovered himself.

"Oh, that is too thin, my boy, hi recognized you hin spite of your mask," said he laughing.

"Sir! Recognized me! Mask! Explain."

"Why the 'azing,' last night, you know."

"Azing, what is that Mr. Brown?"

"Oh, 'ang hit, you know."

"Anged if I do though."

"Why, the way the fellows put me through last night?"

"Put you through? What was it like?"

"Why, 'ang hit, of course you got 'azed,' when you first came here, of course you did."

"Of course I did not, Mr. Brown."

"What, didn't they do nothing to yer?"

"I don't know what you call nothing, but when I first came to this ancient seat of learning I was initiated into the sublime mysteries of the 'Sillybobs of Greece.'"

"Oh, that's what you call hit, aye? An' be you one of 'em now?"

"Oh, yes, I'm a Sillybob. Were you initiated last night?"

"You are right, I was."

"Sir, I congratulate you," said Tommy, shaking him cordially by the hand.

"Hit's a big thing, aye?"

"You may well believe it, sir. Why, all the great men who ever lived have been made Sillybobs, that is, if they have ever been to school. Don't you forget it?"

"Hindeed I won't. But hi say, Tommy, won't you give me the tip?"

"The what?"

"The tip, you know."

"No, sir, I do not know."

"Don't you know what a 'tip' is? Why, don't they know hannything habont 'tips' in this here bloody country?"

"You must speak more respectful of my native land, or you will never get your finishing degree in Grecian Sillybobs. Of course we have tips in this country—tips of canes, fishing-rods, and tips over; but I fail to see your point."

"Why, hin' Ingland, which is the greatest country in the world, you know, when one person gives hanother han idea of what his going to be done habout hannything, we call hit giving the tip. Understand?"

"Oh, yes, I see. Well, what sort of a tip do you wish me to give you?"

"You know hal' habout hit, my dear fellow, hand hi wish you'd tell me what hi ham to do."

"Yes; you seek further instructions."

"Hexactly."

"Well, the first thing necessary for a freshly-made Sillybob to do, is to perform some feat of daring in connection with a feast. For instance, one

of the most appropriate and graceful things of the kind that I ever knew, was where a newly elected member made a little feast for a few of the older members, the chief portion of which was a pet pony belonging to one of the trustees."

"'Ow did he get it?"

"Of course there was but one way. The owner would not sell it."

"Oh, he cribbed it, eh?"

"Well, he got it and so did we. But, mind you, a boughten feast will not do."

"Oh, hi hunderstand. But what shall I do?"

"That depends upon how bright you wish to shine in the ancient brotherhood of which you have been partly made a member."

"Blarst my bloody 'lies—what shall I do?" asked the victim, puzzled about the matter.

Tommy said nothing for a moment or two, for to tell the truth, he was himself trying to think of a trap for Brown's benefit.

Of course the reader who remembers the account given of how Tommy was "hazed," will understand that it was all nonsense about there being any ancient brotherhood or initiation; it was simply putting a new scholar through as big a course of sprouts as possible, and make him have good reason for remembering it—and they generally did. The writer of this remembers his experience very well.

But the greenness of Brown made him such a splendid subject for a joke that Tommy could not let the affair pass without getting him on some sort of a string.

This was what he was thinking of now.

"Give me a tip, Tommy," he said again, after thinking for some time.

"Well, you know Pike, the janitor?"

"Oh, yes; he gave me some impudence the other day, han, hi knocked him bloomin silly."

"Well, he has got a nice litter of young pigs; and baked pig with fixings is good. For desert, I would suggest one of Professor Taylor's beautiful watermelons."

"By Jove, Tommy, you're a trump. Hi'll do hit, hi will, by jingoes, hand you shall be there to see hit hi don't do hit Brown."

"I hope you will do it 'Brown,'" said he, going.

"Ah, very good. By Jove, but I like that little fellow, hand yet hi'd swear he 'elped put me through last night, the smooth faced joker. Now, then, hi must stir habout hand show the felows that hi ham no cad," he said walking toward the academy in a thoughtful mood.

Of course Tommy lost no time in telling his friends about the string he had got freshy Brown on, and all hands went to work, concocting for his benefit.

Tommy watched him closely, and yet there was no need of his doing so, for Brown went to him with every move he made.

"Hi say, Tommy, lad, hi don't like this blarsted hidea of going for that pig," said he.

"What? Are you going to give it up?" asked Tommy, severely.

"Oh, bless you, no, honly hi could get somebody else to go for that pig. Hi wouldn't mind going for the melon, you know; that's clean."

"You must either give up the whole affair or procure the beast with your own hands. Remember the eyes of the felows are upon you, and your future depends upon it more than you know of."

"Oh, hal' right. Hi'll do hit, depend hi will."

"We shall see."

"Hi'll go for the pig to-night."

"All right," replied Tommy, going away to report progress to the boys.

That night Tommy, Dovey, Frank Sanborn, the writer, and a half a dozen others were out to see the fun. Brown was on his mettle and we wanted to see it.

Pretty soon he came from his boarding house—he was too aristocratic to board as the rest of us did—and started in the direction of the barn where the old sow and her pigs had their quarters. He had a bag under his arm and was well disguised.

We followed far enough behind not to be seen. Finally he reached the barn and began looking about,

The old sow happened to be on her beam ends, and just then serving her little customers with milk. On account of the good she had done for the larder of the Academy, she had been given quarters in a shed outside of the barn, and here he found her.

Stealing cautiously up to where they lay, he prepared for action. It was quite dark and he had provided himself with a bull's-eye lantern. This he now brought into use and found out how the land and the pigs lay.

The old sow grunted inquiringly as she heard his footsteps, but being very busy she didn't look up to see what was going on.

Brown opened his bag, took up one of the little porkers and thrust him in. But, lord Harry! how he did squeal, and kick, and jump around in that bag. Oh, oh!

This brought the mother to her feet. She seized Brown by the coat and began to pull and shake. Brown wanted the pig, and she acted just as though she wanted Brown.

Just as it began to look as though he would be unable to get away from the sow, the goat (the same one we have often seen in these stories) came to the rescue. Striking Brown squarely on the seat of his pants, he knocked him right out of that coat, leaving it with the sow and sending him heels over head into some muck that stood about ten feet away.

His lantern was knocked out of light and sight, and he was knocked out of time.

What the dickens it was that struck him he didn't know. His first impression was that he had been run into by a locomotive, and then, as he lay there in the unsavory mush and the stars began to fade from before him, he thought he had been detected in the act.

But not a word was said. It was so dark that the goat was not visible, although he stood close by, shaking his head and stumpy tail. The old sow was shaking the coat, tearing it into rags and treading it into the mud in her fury, while the pig in the bag remained quiet, and was trying to find its way out or hunting for that last teat. Truly it was a dramatic picture,

Brown didn't appear to like it, neither the picture itself or the smell it had.

So he concluded to get up and see what had happened to him.

He attempted to do so, and had just crawled upon dry land again, when the goat leaped out of the darkness at him, and sent him back into the slush head first.

Then he thought somebody was throwing stones, and that one weighing a ton had hit him.

Meantime the old sow was tearing the coat into still smaller bits, and the pig in the bag was now a pig out of the bag, and Brown was a dirty student out of his head.

Tommy and his friends were near enough to see and hear, and you may depend upon it, we were enjoying it.

"Who—who's there?" asked Brown, in a deep, trembling voice, looking in the direction from which the last blow came.

But of course there was no reply.

"Better not throw any more stones this way. Want ter kill the pig or somethin' don't yer?"

It required the greatest effort to keep from yelling right out, so full were we when this comical query came from our victim.

"Somebody'll get hurt if you don't look out," he muttered, as he crawled out of the mud. "Wonder where my bull's eye is? Blarst this here joke hany way. I wish hi'd stayed at 'ome."

Just then the goat paid him another compliment, butting him this time over on top of the sow, and she rooted him over and stepped on him, and tore his clothes some more.

By this time he began to think that the old evil one was keeping him company, and so he concluded to get over the fence without further loss of time.

Leaving some more of his good clothes with the sow he tore himself away and ran for the fence.

He got about half way over it himself. He got the remainder of the way without any further labor. The goat assisted him.

He landed on his head on the other side of that barnyard fence, but he never stopped to see whether his neck was broken or not; he was bound to put as much land between himself and that hog-pen as possible in the shortest time he conveniently could.

Sadly and sorely did he retrace his steps. A more sorry and used-up-looking chap was never seen before, and as we followed we began to wonder if he would give up the pig and cheat us out of our feast.

The next day he did not show up, and we had great fun laughing over his misadventures, and circulating the story among the boys.

But the following day he was at school although he looked sad and troubled.

There were several scratches and bruises about the visible parts of his body, and he had on a new suit of clothes, and was well perfumed with musk.

"Did you get the pig?" asked Tommy, when he had an opportunity of speaking to him aside.

"Oh, yes, hi 'ave it all right," said he with a sad smile.

"Get it night before last?"

"Oh, yes. I got it then."

Tommy thought he did get it then.

"Yes, that's ail right, lad, an' hi 'ave made arrangements with my landlady to cook it for us. It's a beauty."

The fact was, Brown had sent his landlady to buy a pig at the market. No more pig-stealing for him, if he knew himself.

"Well, when does the feast come off?"

"To-night, lad, at ten o'clock."

"Have you got the watermelon?"

"I shall go for that habout nine o' clock to-night. I'm a game one, Tommy. Now, you invite a dozen of the right sort of felows you know, and be at my 'ouse at ten."

"All right."

That noon Tommy went over to see Mr. Taylor's gardener and they had a good laugh over something, and at the appointed hour Brown stole over the fence and stole away with the largest melon he could find.

In the meantime Mrs. Pierce, the lady he boarded with, had cooked a pig and several other things, quite enough for a good meal, and it was all on the table when we arrived,

Brown came in soon after with a huge green squash under his arm. Of course we knew what it was at first glance, but he did not, and so we kept our faces the best we could.

He was in fine spirits. Placing the squash on the table he struck an attitude.

"There! Professor Taylor has contributed the best watermelon he had. 'Twas I did it, Jack Cade. 'Ow's that Tommy, lad?"

"Very fine, Brother Brown," replied Tommy.

We all complimented him on his expertness in stealing, assuring him that he was the only fellow



The goat struck Brown squarely on the seat, knocking him out of his coat and leaving it in the mouth of the sow.

in the whole school who would have dared to do such a thing, or could have succeeded if he had dared.

Brown was flattered until he swelled up like a toad.

"Brother Sillybobs," he said, after we had seated ourselves at the table, "thinking a few rations would be relished by you, hi 'ave prepared a little feast. Here," said he, pointing to the pig, "is a pig that belonged to the academy. It was born for us students, but thinking it would not be so tough now as when it got to be a hog, hi 'ave brought it here to-night."

We cheered him, of course, and in a very short time we were sampling that little squealer. It was cooked nicely, and we enjoyed it.

While we were eating it Brown treated us to a dramatic narration of how he captured it. But it was so very unlike what we had witnessed, that it seemed like some other affair.

But we swallowed the story with the pig, although the story was the toughest.

After we had finished the pig and fixings, and he had finished his story, he arose and said:

"Gentlemen, I trust you have enjoyed it."

Of course we said we had.

"Now, then, let us see how Professor Taylor's watermelons taste," said he, taking a carving-knife and cutting the squash in two pieces.

An unripe squash.

Then we laughed. We couldn't help it.

"What provokes your laughter, gentlemen?" he asked looking from one to another.

"Brother Brown, you have made a sad mistake," said Tommy. "Instead of a watermelon you have got a squash."

"A squash?" he asked, starting back.

"Yes, and a green one at that," said Dovey.

"'Ow the bloody 'ell is this, anyway?" he said looking from one to another.

"From not knowing the difference between a watermelon and a squash," said Frank.

Brown appeared to have lost his appetite and his boastfulness at the same time.

"But it's all right," put in Tommy. "We don't care much for watermelon, anyway. The spirit you displayed is quite enough to show us that you are worthy of being a Sillybob, and that is all we ask. It now becomes my duty, Mr. Brown, to present you with the emblematic clothing and outfit of a real Spartan Sillybob. You have been weighed and found to be all hunky. Hereafter, when you wear this clothing, you will be welcomed into the best and bravest society in the world."

Tommy stooped down and from under the table took a large bundle, wrapped carefully in a paper and tied closely.

"Here is the clothing in this bundle. We will now take our leave of you, and you can put it on at your leisure. Be sure and wear it at our next monthly meeting, one week from to-night."

"Thank you, Brother Sillybobs. I shall wear it with pleasure and pride," said Brown.

"We all believe you will. Good night," said he, extending his hand.

We all shook hands solemnly with him and went away.

We had scarcely gone a rod before he ran back to his room, and we crept under the window to listen.

Opening the package he was thunderstruck to find the coat that the old sow had torn and trampled into the manure, the bag in which he had placed the pig, and the bull's-eye lantern.

What a highly perfumed lot it was.

"'Ow the bloody 'ell is this, anyway?" he said to himself. "Sold, by thunder! What a bloody hass hi 'ave made of myself. And they know all about it, I'll wager—oh, what a hass!"

Just then Mrs. Pierce, his landlady, came in.

"Oh, how did they like the supper?"

"Oh, they be 'anged," he growled.

"What?"

"Oh, what a blarsted hass!" he moaned, with clenched fists and a sickly expression.

"Why, what have you got this squash here for?" she asked, pointing to it.

But he paid no attention to her.

"Oh, what a silly hass: and there I went and told them a cock-and-bull story habout that cussed pig; oh, what a hass!"

"And what is it that smells so, Mr. Brown?"

Brown stopped, gazed at her an instant, and then catching up the savory bundle he threw it from the window.

It struck close to where we stood.

"Mr. Brown, what have you done?"

"Made a hass of myself, madam, that's what hi 'ave done," he growled.

The laugh that we sent up under his window convinced him that he had come to the right conclusion. He was white with rage.

"I might have told you that there would have been some mischief cut up when I saw that Tommy Bounce here," said she.

"Oh, you be 'anged, madam. Tommy didn't do it, I 'ave done it myself."

"Done what?"

"Made a blooming, silly hass of myself. I shall leave town to-morrow morning. Leave me alone."

She went from the room greatly bewildered, while he threw himself into a chair, mad enough to tear his red hair out by the roots.

We left him alone in his glory, but never saw him again.

The next day he packed his trunks and left for parts unknown, but wherever he is, if in the land of the living, he probably remembers the night when he was made a Sillybob and received the regalia.

It was lucky for him that he did not remain, for the story was soon in everyone's mouth.

I did intend to tell another of Tommy's pranks in this chapter, but space will not admit, so I will take the next chapter to do it.

But the boys had one of those pigs after all, and as they were eating it Tommy treated them to an excellent imitation of Brown, as he related the story of how he captured the little squealer, and the memory of the joke was thus freshened up and made even brighter than the original was.

CHAPTER XX.

ONCE more I have to record the doings of our hero, Tommy Bounce, and his chums at school in Andover.

The reader, of course, remembers Pike, the janitor, and perhaps some of the tricks he has played upon him at various times; well, this story relates to another scrape at his expense.

For a long time after the last trick played upon him by Tommy, Pike attended to his own business pretty well. He felt sure that he would get the worst of it if he attempted to interfere with the boys—especially Tommy and his crowd—and besides, it took a long time for his foot to get over the effects of kicking that wooden football.

But, sneaking old bachelor that he was, he could not long remain decent and attend to his own affairs, for, being naturally meddlesome, he had to stick his nose into something, to see if he couldn't worry somebody, or do something to curry favor with the school faculty.

Well, on one occasion the boys had agreed to have a "candy pull" in Tommy's room, and everything had been arranged for a regular good time.

But it must be remembered that since we last saw Pike he had shifted his quarters, and now had a room in one of the dormitories, the one above that where Tommy's room was, the better to watch the buildings and the boys occupying them, and had it not been for the fact that he had behaved quite civilly to them since the last joke played on him, they would have suspected trouble from him, now that he was such a near neighbor.

Two of the teachers also occupied rooms in the

same building, but they bore him no greater love than the boys did.

But Pike evidently found out from some of the boys that there was to be a candy pull in Tommy's room, and as it was against the rules of the school, he resolved to put a stop to it.

And yet he had learned caution, and now, instead of putting himself forward, he resolved to bring us face to face with Professor Taylor, the principal of the school.

At all events, we suspected nothing, and went ahead with our preparations for making candy and having a good time.

Belonging to the same institution as our school did was a female academy, and there were hundreds of pretty girls attending it, many of whom were about our own ages and quite as full of fun and adventure.

Four of these girls were especial favorites with Tommy and his friends, on account of their love of fun and being always ready to engage in it, whether it was contrary to the rules or not.

These girls had been invited to take part in our "sweetener," and were on hand just as quick as darkness lent them its veil.

The party was a joyous one, and as there was no one in our building who would "give us away" we felt comparatively safe, and set the molasses to boiling over the stove.

For an hour or more we had splendid fun, the girls being bright, pretty, and just as full of mischief as they could hold.

We had nuts to crack, the meats of which we were to put into our molasses candy when it had boiled enough, and what with cracking these, cracking jokes and kissing the girls, the time passed altogether too quick, in fact.

"Hark!" said Tommy. "Don't make too much noise, for it is about time for old Nosey to be around to see if the lights are out."

"We'll put 'em out," suggested Frank Sanborn. "We'll put you out," said one of the girls, pulling his hair in payment for a teasing he had been giving her.

"Oh, but I say, wouldn't it be jolly if old Pike should drop on us?" said another fellow.

"Jolly! very jolly," was the verdict. "Never fear him. He remembers the lessons he has been taught," said Dovey.

"I wish we had extended an invitation to Professor Taylor," said another.

"So do I. I'll bet the old fellow would enjoy a candy-pull as well as any of us," said another of the girls.

"Let's appoint a committee of one to wait upon him, and invite him up," said Frank.

At that instant the door was opened. "I am here, gentleman, without an invitation," said Professor Taylor, striding into the room, followed by the hated janitor, Pike.

In an instant all was confusion. The girls screamed and hid behind chairs, while the boys looked sheepish enough to grow wool.

Tommy, as usual, came to the front. "Master Bounce, what is the meaning of this?" asked the professor, pointing to the kettle of boiling molasses.

"We are having a candy-pull, sir. Very glad you have come, sir. We were just debating about sending for you, sir," said he, looking him frankly in the face with that innocent look for which he was famous.

"Silence sir. How dare you?"

"Well, sir, we thought perhaps you would enjoy it as well as we do. At all events we had made up our minds to present you with some candy to-morrow."

"Silence, sir. Do you know that this is grossly against the rules of the school?"

"No, sir, else why should we propose sending for you, or taking you some of our candy?"

"But how come these young ladies here?"

"Well, sir, Miss Allen is an expert at making molasses candy, and we got her to come here and take charge of the affair."

Pike, in the meantime, stood behind the professor, grinning like a hyena.

"But, sir, you know that such a thing is contrary to the rules of both schools, and makes you liable to expulsion!"

"Oh, no, sir, we would not place them in such a position as that. Besides, sir, I never saw or heard of a rule that mentions such a case as this."

"But common sense should have taught you better, young ladies; put on your things and go immediately to your rooms. I shall report you in the morning," said he, turning to the girls.

"Oh, sir, we did not know we were doing wrong," said Clara Allen, coming forward and putting her bewitching pretty face up toward his.

"I am astonished at you!"

"Please don't report them, Mr. Taylor. Put all the blame on me; they are innocent," said Tommy in his frank, generous way.

"Well, let them return at once, and I will deal directly with you."

"Thank you, sir," said Tommy; while the girls began silently to put on their things.

"Do anything you like with me, but please hold them blameless."

"I am astonished at you, Master Bounce, a boy who has been here so long as you have; you must have known better."

"Well, sir, in proof that we did not consider it against the rules, we have attempted not the slightest concealment and as to-morrow is the birthday of your little grandson, Leander, we were calculating to present him with a nice piece of walnut candy, and never suspected we were wrong in doing so."

This touched the old professor on a tender point. Tommy knew it would for he almost worshipped his grandson, and Tommy had often escaped trouble by showing attention to this child.

For a moment the old fellow hesitated, but duty and discipline were before him, and he could only act in one way.

"Please, sir, may one of the boys escort us home? It is very dark."

This was Miss Allen, and her bright beauty evidently stirred the old gentlemen. But he was not inclined to sanction a further breach of discipline.

"No, I will escort you myself," said he. "Now, sirs, take that molasses off the stove and make no further attempt at this. Go to your rooms at once, and each of you report to me in the morning immediately after prayers."

"Yes, sir," said Tommy, lifting the pot from the stove.

"Away with you to your rooms!"

The boys scattered without a word.

"Come, girls," he added, starting for the door. Pike followed without a word, or without looking back even. He felt guilty, and did not look one of them in the face.

On the way back to their rooms the girls pleaded eloquently for us, and Miss Allen, the little arch coquette, she actually had the cheek to take the old fellow's arm and tell him all about how innocent we all were of intentional harm, and dwelling particularly on the object we had in view of presenting little Leander with a nice large piece of candy on his birthday.

In fact, she soft-soaped the old gentleman to such a degree that he began to feel almost sorry that he had broken the affair up.

But he pretended to feel very indignant, and cautioned them in a long lecture never to go again into a student's room under any circumstances, which they of course promised never to do.

The result was that when we reported the next morning as he had ordered us to, he gave us a good sharp lecture and nothing more, beyond the usual threat to expel us should we ever be caught at such a thing again.

As for Tommy and Dovey, they watched everybody out of sight and then took a portion of the molasses and placing it in a tin basin, proceeded to make what candy they wanted and sent a large sheet of it to the girls the next day.

But while they were at work upon it they took up Pike's case and discussed it freely, the reader may be assured.

"What shall we do to get square with him?" asked Dovey, after they had concluded that he was the one who bluffed the affair.

Tommy was silent and thoughtful.

"Confound his old hide. I wish he had the rest of that hot molasses poured down his throat!" Dovey continued.

"I'll get even with him, never you fear," replied Tommy, as he stirred the molasses.

"He has forgotten us, I guess."

"Well, we will refresh his memory; but not just yet. Keep perfectly quiet for a day or two and first see how the affair ends. We may be expelled."

"No, never fear. Clara will chin him into a good feeling towards us."

"Yes, if she loves you as well as you love her, she will," replied Tommy.

Dovey blushed, but said nothing.

"Never mind; say nothing about it for a few days, and then I'll fix a dose for old Nosey."

So they went on making their candy as we have seen.

The next morning, after reporting and receiving the reprimand from Professor Taylor, they all felt free, and talked the matter over among themselves as to what should be done to Pike for the contemptible part he had taken in the affair.

"Come to my room to-night," said Tommy to Frank Sanborn, as they parted at school that night.

"All right, I'll be there."

"But mum. Nobody but you and I, and Dovey."

This was the second day after the trouble. Tommy had watched the janitor until he had learned all his rounds and habits to perfection.

At night, after seeing that supper was properly served to the students, who boarded with the school he attended to matters around the barns, giving directions for the following day, and then went to his room in the dormitory building.

A few minutes before nine he would go up and down the two rows of dormitories, to see if the lights were all out and that no students were sky-larking.

This round generally took him from fifteen to twenty minutes, after which he returned to his own room and went to bed.

This room of his, by the way, was a queer-looking place.

The furniture consisted of only a bed, a chair, and

a small stand. The old woman who made the beds hated him as bad as we did, and sometimes refused to make his bed at all, and as for a candle, if there happened to be one that nobody else wanted he might possibly get it, if not he had to go to bed in the dark.

But it made little difference to him. He was a rough, uncultivated man, and so long as he got into bed, that was all he cared for, and he offered no objection to her if she made his room, the catch-all and rattle-trap of all the building.

Consequently the door was seldom locked, and he was contented to live in reality as much like a hog, as he was by nature, for the old woman would brown-beat him, and do as she liked in spite of his abuse of her.

Tommy was not long in learning all this, and on the night in question, after having an understanding with his chums, he waited until Pike had started on his spying rounds, and then taking a basin full of the half-made candy he stole out of doors and under cover of darkness entered the room occupied by his enemy.

A candle was burning on the small table that dimly enabled him to see what he was about. Turning down the bed clothes he proceeded to besmear the sheet with the stiff molasses, and daubed it around generously.

This done he took up the candle, blew it out, took it with him, and left the room.

Meantime Frank Sanborn, whose room was in the same building had apprised a few of the boys of what was going on, and the doors of several rooms were quietly ajar to enable the occupants to hear.

Presently Pike came shambling into the hall and entered his room.

"Where in thunder is that candle, I wonder?" he asked, as he opened the door.

Then he struck a match and looked around.

"That old wench has stolen it, I'll bet a quarter," he muttered. "What an old wretch she is. Why can't we have a decent woman to look after the rooms, I wonder? Well, I must go to bed in the dark again, I suppose, I'm used to it, blast her ugly picture. But I'll bring a box of candles from the storehouse to-morrow and hide them from her."

So he closed his door, placed the stand against it as usual, there being no lock, and began to undress himself for bed in the dark, all the while muttering and cursing the old woman who had stolen his candle as he supposed for her own room.

It was cool weather, and the molasses being so thick, did not stick the top and bottom sheets together, because Tommy had taken pains to fit them in such a way as to prevent their coming together only lightly.

But the moment Pike leaped into bed and pulled the clothes up over him, the warmth of his body made things all right—all right for Tommy and the boys.

For a moment he could not imagine what it was that felt so strange and sticky.

"Ah—ah—ah! Wha—wha—wha! Oh—oh—oh!" he exclaimed, and then rolled out upon the floor—bang!

But the bed-clothing followed him, wound around and stuck to him, and as he struggled and yelled there in the darkness, he could hear the shouts of laughter from above, although what it all meant he couldn't for the life of him tell.

Then he tried to get up on his feet, but he became tangled in his clothing and tumbled over the table, raising a deuce of a rumpus, frightening him more than ever, and again he yelled for help.

After banging around the room for fully five minutes, yelling all sorts of things and tumbling over everything there was to tumble over, he managed to get the door open and struggled out into the hall way.

By this time the two teachers who roomed in the same building, and several of the boys had come out of their rooms and came down stairs to learn what the trouble was.

Pike stood there like a shrouded ghost all wound and stuck up, and the more he fought to get free the closer he was held.

"What's the matter down there?" asked Mr. Eaton, one of the teachers.

"Help! help! Come down here, quick!" moaned Pike.

At this they all came down with their lighted candles.

Such a sight, and such a shout as the boys sent up was a caution.

"What are you doing?" asked the other teacher, coming nearer to him.

"I don't know. Something sticks."

"I should say so. What is it?"

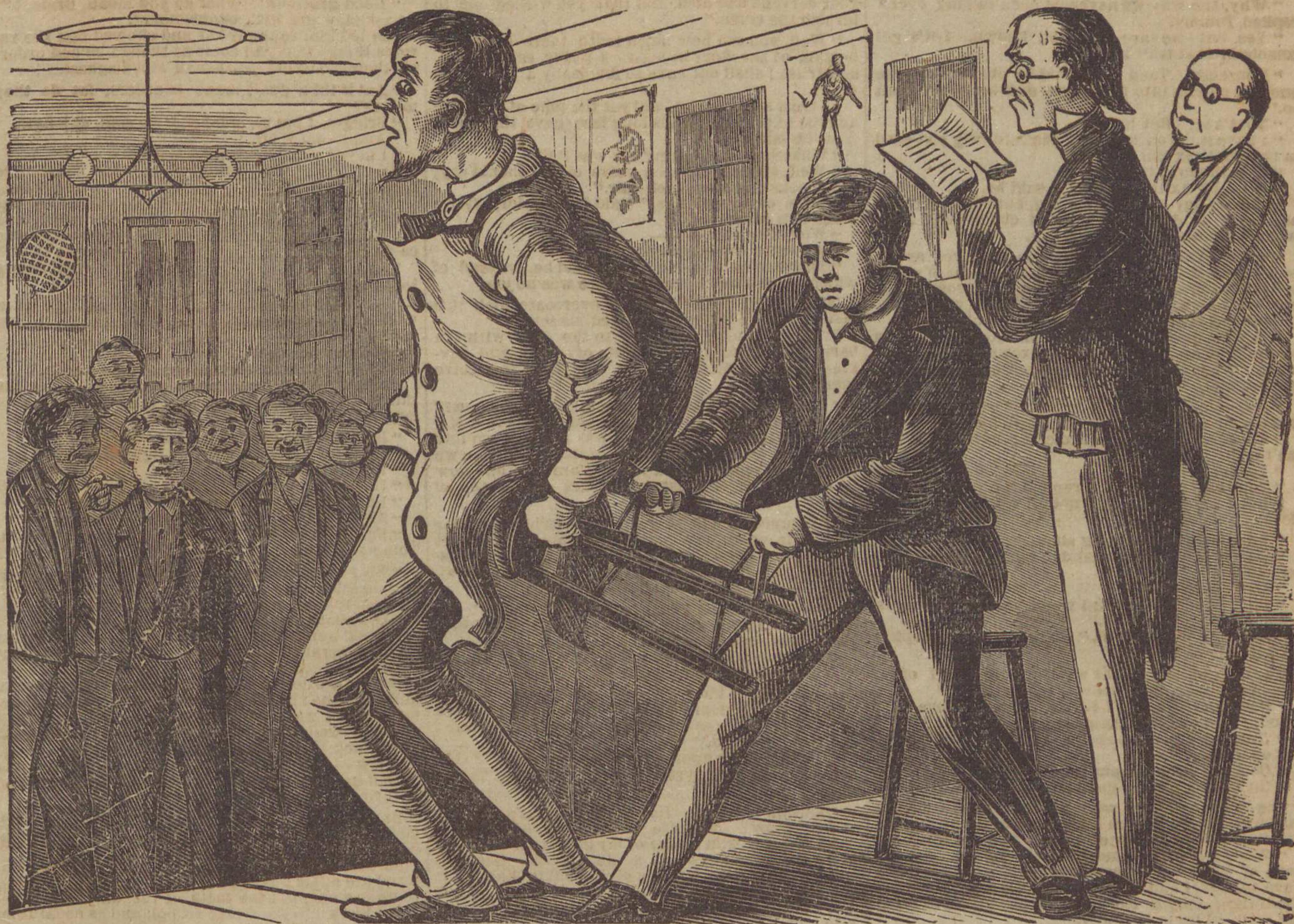
"I don't know, but I suspect some of the boys have been playing a trick on me," said he, most mournfully.

"A trick? Why you are all stuck up with, with—why it's molasses," said Mr. Eaton.

"Oh, Lord! Tommy Bounce!" moaned Pike.

"Yes, yes, it was Tommy Bounce, I know it was."

The boys laughed, and the teachers, while they assisted the miserable janitor by peeling off the sheets as they would have stripped the hide from a calf, could not keep straight faces over the ludicrous situation.



Mr. Eaton was vainly endeavoring to wrench the stool from his companion, and all the while the laugh grew louder, until it was deafening.

But Ley tore the sheets from him after a while, and a more sorry-looking man was never seen or heard of. Not daring to put on his clothes, and there being no water nearer than the pump in the center of the street, midway the length of the row of buildings, he was obliged to go out to it in his shirt-tail, in order to wash the molasses from his person.

And while out there his troubles were renewed, for it seemed as though every student within speaking or shouting distance knew about it, and they yelled at him, threw bed lamps, bottles, books, sticks of wood, rotten eggs, and all sorts of things at him, besides asking him all sorts of questions, and tormenting the life out of him.

They had the advantage, for their rooms were dark and he could not see them, while they could see him and make a target of him, greatly to his sorrow and disgust.

A more sorry man was never known. He actually cried as he stood there shivering and pumping water to wash himself with. But while in this sad plight he made a vow never to interfere with or molest Tommy Bounce again while he remained at Andover.

And he kept his word for quite a while. But he did not "show up" at school again for a week. He hired another man to take his place while he went off to have a rest.

The affair created a deal of fun in school and established Tommy still firmer in the hearts of his comrades, for although only a chosen few knew him as the author of the joke, yet he was credited with it by the whole school.

While I have yet room, and while writing about sticky affairs, I can't help telling of one more which made great fun at the time.

It happened two or three months after the one just narrated, and in this way.

Mr. Polk, one of the teachers, had caught Tommy at some of his pranks and reported him. The result was he got a thrashing.

Tommy never allowed a debt of this kind to go unpaid, so he set his wits to work in some way to get even with Polk.

Every Saturday morning, or just before the school closed for the week, Professor Taylor had the school all assembled from the various recitation-rooms and gave a pleasing lecture on the topics of the day, or some question of interest pertaining to one or more of the various studies before us.

These were state occasions with the old professor, and everything had to be just so. The classes had

to be arranged in just such places and the teachers ranged on either side of him on stools, while he occupied the professor's large chair in the center of the platform group.

Tommy knew all this, and going over to his colored friend, the shoemaker, he procured a piece of wax, the toughest and stickiest kind,

This he placed in small pellets on the top of the stool to be occupied by Polk, scattering and arranging them in such a way that they would not be noticed.

The janitor placed the great chair in the center, and arranged the four stools, two on either side, as they always stood, and, as usual, after the classes had all assembled in the school-room, in marched the professor, followed by his assistants, and took their accustomed seats, while those fellows who knew of the joke posted others or told them to keep their eyes open for fun.

Professor Taylor gave us his usual lecture on some scientific question. The teachers sat upright like wooden men, looking neither to the right or to the left while it was being delivered.

It was also a custom after this lecture had been finished, and the school about to be dismissed for the Saturday afternoon holiday, for everybody, teachers and all, to rise and sing the doxology, that a solemn impression might be made upon the students.

The lecture was sometimes dreary, as it was on this occasion. Pike, the janitor, stood by the door. He had whaled several of the smaller boys for laughing at his late misfortune, although he had never mentioned it to Tommy, but now that he had received a good flogging, he felt much better and seemed to be more at peace with the world.

Tommy did not envy him his consolation, and although he had twitted him about it that very day, he paid no attention to it and waited patiently.

The lecture finished, the signal was given for the school to rise and sing. Professor Taylor rose and so did the teachers.

Polk rose and so did the stool. It stuck to the seat of his pants as though it had grown there.

A snicker ran through the school which soon broke into a loud laugh as they saw his confusion and his frantic efforts to free himself from his seat.

Professor Taylor turned to see what was disturbing the exercises. Mr. Eaton was vainly endeavoring to wrench the stool from his companion, and all the while the laugh grew louder until it was deafening.

Finally Pike mounted the platform and went to the rescue. He and Eaton grabbed the stool and pulled, but Polk followed and without being able to pull it from him, they dragged him all over the platform, while the students swung their hats and shouted with uproarious delight.

At length they heard something rip, and poor Polk went sprawling one way, minus the seat of his pants, while Pike and Eaton fell over in the corner with the stool to which still adhered that part of the teacher's pants most often used to sit upon.

Picking himself up he held his hands behind him, and ran into the recitation-rooms, followed by Pike and Eaton.

There was no doxology sang that day, and the school broke up with a wild hurrah, and another feather for Tommy's cap.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE last recorded scrape in which Tommy Bounce was engaged, as will be remembered, was the trick he played on the teacher by the aid of some shoemaker's wax which caused him to lift his stool when he attempted to rise and to lose the seat of his trousers in getting separated from it.

Tommy was suspected as the author of the mischief, but, as usual, he had covered up his tracks so nicely that they were unable to bring it home against him, and so he got off scot free.

By this time it will be understood that he was full of mischief as an egg is of meat, and that he could not long keep from it. True, there was scarcely a day that he did not play a practical joke on some of his schoolmates, but these were generally "little ones for a cent," and I remember only a few of them.

But it was only a short time after the wax trick before he took it into his head to play a joke on our venerable professor. He seldom attempted anything of the kind on the old gentleman, because he was such a good soul and a general favorite.

But good, bad, or indifferent, Tommy couldn't, to save the life of him, resist the temptation to play a trick upon him occasionally. The reader will remember the one with the cats.

Well, he and his room-mate, Dovey, put their heads together on the subject and it was soon arranged.

"But how shall we work?" asked Dovey.

"Why, the way we have just been talking over," replied Tommy.

"Yes, but we are too well known. Let's get somebody that isn't known."

"Nonsense. Then we should be obliged to take another person into the game, and we don't want to."

"That's so. But how?"

"I have it. You have got that old wig you used in the tableaux last winter?"

"Yes; the long black one."

"Well, I'll fix it with that," said he.

The next day he took the wig, cut off the curls, and with it disguised himself completely, after which he started for down town.

He visited nearly every store in Andover as the messenger of Professor Taylor, the result of which we shall soon see. Then watching a favorable opportunity he pulled off the wig, stuffed it into his pocket and returned in time to recite his lessons.

The next morning four loads of wood were driven to the professor's house and thrown on the sidewalk. What this meant the gentleman couldn't understand.

"Sir, you have made a mistake," said he to the last driver as he began throwing off his load.

"Guess not. This is Professor Taylor's house, isn't it?"

"Yes, but—"

"That's all right then," replied the teamster.

"But I tell you, sir, it is not all right. I have—"

"I don't know anything about it. Boss sent us."

"But he has made a mistake; I have wood enough on hand to last a year."

"Can't help it, sir."

"But you must help it; I won't have my sidewalk encumbered in this way."

"Have ter see the boss," said the fellow, keeping on with his unloading.

The old gentleman was wrathful. He didn't often lose his temper, but this was too much.

"Confound you, sir! If you don't remove the wood, I'll send the constable after you."

"Have ter see the boss," replied the man, chucking off the last stick.

"Confound your impudence, sir!"

"Git up!" said he, speaking to his horses.

The old gentleman went over to prayers, feeling but little like it, and on his return he found four or five tons of coal deposited by the side of the wood.

"What idiots some men are," he mused. "Now, both of these men have made mistakes, and will have to shovel and load this all up again. It serves them right, only it isn't serving me right, to litter my walk all up in this way."

He went into the house to get breakfast, but he had scarcely finished before he was summoned into the sitting-room, where a man was in waiting to see him.

"Ah! Good morning, professor," said the man.

"Good morning, sir," replied Mr. Taylor, although he was not acquainted with his visitor.

"I am very sorry for you, sir."

"Sorry?" he asked, in surprise.

"Yes, it is hard to lose one's servants, especially when they are good ones."

"Sir?"

"But death is abroad in the land, and he spares neither sex or condition."

"Sir, I do not understand you."

"Your servant woman?"

"On, you wish to see her, do you?"

"Yes, I am the undertaker and have come to perform the last sad duties to her."

"Are you an escaped lunatic, sir? My servant is in the kitchen," replied the old man, rising and getting red in the face.

"In the kitchen? Did she die there?"

"Now, sir. I am certain that you are a lunatic. What do you mean?"

"Is she not dead?"

"Not unless she has died since I came in here. Bridget!" he called.

"Comin', sur," she replied.

"There, sir, is my servant," said he, as he entered. "Does she look as though she needed the services of an undertaker?"

"Well, I—I—should say not," stammered the man.

"An undertaker, is it?" she asked.

"Yes, he came here to measure you for a coffin," said Mr. Taylor, laughing at the ridiculousness of the thing.

"Lay me out? Begorra, I think I can lay him out," said she.

"I guess I—that is, there is a mistake somewhere," said the disappointed undertaker.

"Yes, I should venture to say there is, quite a mistake. Allow me to wish you a very good morning, sir."

"Shall I show him out?" said the woman, with a significant gesture which showed that she was keeping for the privilege.

"No, return to your business."

"Begorra, I'd tach him ter come 'round here ter lay out a dacit womin, so I wud," she muttered, as with clenched fists she turned away.

"I have been imposed upon, Mr. Taylor."

"By whom?"

"A boy came to my store yesterday and said that

your servant had died, and that you wished me to furnish the coffin."

"Well, you see how much truth there is in one portion of the story at least. I never sent to you, and trust I shall not have to for many a long time yet."

"I trust so," said he, and yet the tone of his voice and the expression of his long face gave the lie to what he said.

"What sort of a looking boy was it?"

"Well, about seventeen years old, I should say; red cheeks and long black hair."

"None of my scholars," said Mr. Taylor, after a moment's reflection.

"Well, I'm sorry!"

"Sorry for what, sir?"

"That I have annoyed you," said he, instead of which he was sorry because there was no job,

The doleful dealer in final overcoats took his leave, and the professor started for school.

Presently a man drove up to the door with ten barrels of potatoes, five barrels of onions, and several bags of apples. Bridget was there to receive them.

"Is the ould gentleman goin' crazy I don't know?" she mused, after the man had assured her that Mr. Taylor had ordered them, and was rolling them into the cellar. "Begob, but he must be. Sure, we bad praties enough for a year before this, an' now he has enough ter last two years on the top o' that."

The teamster had scarcely gone when another wagon drove up, loaded with pumpkins. Bridget at first refused to receive them, but after being assured that the professor had ordered them, she allowed him to carry them into the cellar.

"I wonder is he goin' to take boarders?" she mused. "If he does I'll not work for him. Howly Moses, fat does he want with these pumpkins?"

Another cart drove up loaded with dried codfish, fully two hundred pounds.

"Faix, now I know he's crazy. Begob, I think he's got the jim-jams, so I do. Fat the devil does he want of all these dried turkeys? Sure, he must have the jim-jams."

Then came the apothecary's boy with a dozen bottles of soothing syrup that he said Mr. Taylor had ordered.

"Southin' syrup! Howly mother, fat's that for I don't know? Ter ate on the codfish maybe. Faith, I'll give him notice of my goin' this very day so I will. I'll not live wid a crazy man. Southin' syrup! Hout! it's fat they give squakin' kids, so it is. Faix, he has the rale ould fashioned jim-jams."

In the course of half an hour another man called with a pair of guinea-hens, saying that Mr. Taylor had ordered them brought to his house.

"What won't a crazy man do?" she exclaimed, holding up her hands in astonishment. "Gunny-hens! Fat the devil does he want with the loikes of them scratchin' basts onwyay? Stop your noise, or I'll scrape the gizzards of the pair of ye!" she yelled, as they began their infernal screeching. "Well, well, fat will come next, I wonder?"

It was a box of nails.

"Faix, I'll not stay here another day," she muttered, after the teamster had gone away. "Sure he may become dangerous."

Then came two dozen chairs.

"Boarders, begorra! So I'll not stay, crazy or not crazy," she muttered.

A barrel of rum was the next thing that came.

"Oh, the ould sly fox! Doesn't he be aferther makin' ivry body belave that he's a timperance man, an' here is a barrel of rum. Faix, I don't know but I'll stay now—woop! what a lot of ill-giant drunks there's in that barrel!"

Then came a load of cabbages.

"No, I'll sthay," she muttered, looking at the hundred heads of cabbage. "That manes boarders."

Then two men came and began taking off the blinds from the house, to repaint them, carting them away to the shop.

"Yis it's boarders, so it is," she muttered again, as she saw them go away.

Then came two barrels of beans.

"Boarders!" she said again, "but he'll have ter get somebody else to cook his old bones. I'll not do it! I'd see him hung first."

Presently the old professor came from the academy and Bridget tackled him.

"Mr. Taylor, I'm aferther lavin' ye."

"Leaving me? What for, Bridget?" he asked, in great surprise.

"Faix I never agreed to yer havin' boarders."

"Boarders! What do you mean?"

"Och, Mr. Taylor, I always tuck ye for a dacint gentleman, but yer trying ter deceiv me."

"Why, Bridget, are you as mad as everybody else seems to be to-day?"

"No, but I think ye are, Mr. Taylor."

"Explain yourself immediately."

"Aren't ye goin' for ter kape boarders?"

"Why to be sure not. Whatever put such an idea into your head?"

"Thin fat made ye buy the two barrels of praties an' unions, an' cabbages, an' pumpkins, an' all the codfish, an' the barrel of rum, an' the soothin' syrup an' the chairs, an' the banes, an' the bloody Gunny-hins?" she asked, half indignantly.

"Good gracious! What do you mean, Bridget?" he asked, white with astonishment.

She led him to the cellar and showed him the various things that had come as though he had ordered them. The old gentleman stood aghast.

"An' if them don't mane boarders, fat do they mane?"

"Bridget, I am astonished," he said, at length.

"And so am I, sir."

"I never ordered things, never."

"Och, begob, how bad he's got 'em," she said, to herself, while watching the expression of his face.

"Bridget, there is roguery here; somebody has been imposing upon these people in my name, and the wood and coal outside, and the undertaker who came this morning is only a part of the same trick."

"Oh, sakes alive!" she said, softly, "an' nary a thing of these ye bought?"

"Not one, it is an imposition; if I could only learn who did it, I warrant you they would have to suffer."

"Howley Moses!"

"That same black-haired boy, I'll be sworn."

Bridget stood for a moment trying to get the thing through her wool, and then she began to laugh loudly.

"Begorra, but isn't that good."

"I cannot see it in the same light, Bridget."

"It's comical."

"It's outrageous," said he, warmly.

"But it makes me laugh."

"And me indignant; who can the rascal be?"

"Faix, I shud say that it was that devil's kid, Tommy Bounce."

"No; this one had long black hair. No, no; it was no scholar belonging to the school, I feel certain of that, thank heaven," said he, proudly.

"Och, but they'll all bear watching."

The old gentleman made no reply, but returned again to his study, where he sat down too indignant for words.

It took a whole week to get things right again, and have the articles returned to the fooled traders, each one of whom was very indignant and threatened to wallop that seventeen-year-old boy with long black hair if they ever came across him.

A few of the most indignant ones visited the school in the hope of recognizing the culprit and securing his punishment.

But neither of them could recognize in tow-headed Tommy Bounce the youth who had so thoroughly fooled them.

So Tommy escaped again, and he and Dovey enjoyed the affair hugely, although they were obliged to do so alone, but the facts of the affair soon became known to the whole school, and as usual Tommy was credited with it.

But this is the first time in all probability that the real facts of the case have been made known, although the trick has since been played in other schools and in other styles.

Before closing this, I guess I will tell you another one in connection with old Pray, the livery stable keeper and constable of the town.

He will be recollect by those who have read these sketches from the first as a mean old fellow, always ready to take advantage of anybody, especially the boys of the academy.

If he let us have a team he would carefully examine to see if he could find a scratch on either the horse or the carriage, and being pretty sure to find them on both, he would make us pay for everything of the kind roundly.

We had played two or three tricks on him, and consequently there was no love between us, and this state of affairs he managed to keep alive by making us pay for any scratches or bruises he could find on his carriage.

It was estimated that he got the first cost of his carriages by these extras, and many of them, we felt sure, we had paid for a half-a-dozen times over.

His idea seemed to be that every boy in school had rich parents to supply them with all the money they wanted, and that he might just as well have it, as for them to squander it in oysters, candy, or cigars. In fact, he seemed to think he was doing us a good turn by getting possession of all the money he could squeeze out of us.

But the truth was, there was a large number of poor boys in school, and even those who had wealthy parents, sometimes run mighty short from one remittance to another, and were very glad to do almost anything to get a little pocket money.

One Saturday afternoon a half a dozen of us went down town, and every mother's son of us was "dead broke."

It was a dreadful state to be in, for the shop windows were filled with tempting things, and the odor of Russel's oyster stews floated on the



"Good evening, Mr. Pray, I have got a nice mutton here. just killed. Wish to buy it?" asked the boy.

"Well, do you see that big load of wood up there in Pray's yard?"

"Yes; we all saw it."

"Let's go up and get the job of sawing and splitting it; what do you say?"

We hesitated a moment, but seeing no other way whereby we could get a stew or a cigar, we finally concluded to try for it, and so followed Tommy into the old fellow's stable.

"Well, what yer want?" he asked, gruffly, for he was just in a nap as we entered, "team?"

"No; we want a job," said Tommy.

"A job? What sort of a job?"

"What will you give us to saw and split that pile of wood there?"

The old fellow looked from one to the other of us, evidently suspecting a trick of some kind.

"Oh, honest Injun, Mr. Pray, we are dead broke and want to get some money," said Tommy.

"Humph! money," he grunted, but, seeing a chance to get his wood cut very cheaply, he was not slow in accommodating us."

"Well, if you'll saw, split, and pile it up nicely under the shed, I'll give you two dollars," said he at length.

Great Shylock! There was at least two cords of seasoned hard wood.

But there it was; we could take up with his offer or let it alone. After consulting and trying to get more for the work, we finally made up our minds to do it if he would find the tools.

This he agreed to do, although he solemnly warned us that he should make us pay for any damage we might do them.

So we went bravely to work. Taking turns at the saw as well as with the ax, and in piling it up under the shed. We worked like beavers, and it required hard work to do it. But we were nerved by the thought of the good spree we would have after our job was done.

It was after sunset when we finished, and Tommy went into the house to get the money.

"Too late, young man," said Pray.

"Too late? For what?"

"It is after sunset, and to-day is Saturday. I never transact any business after sunset," he added, falling back on an old Puritanical custom then still somewhat in vogue.

"But we have honestly earned our money."

"Well, that may be, although I have got to look at my tools to see if they are injured any."

"Well, come out and look at them now."

"No, it is getting dark and I cannot see."

"And we are not to get our money?"

"Come down on Monday, and if I find that everything is all right I will pay you."

"But we are hungry."

"Well, go and get your supper."

"We are too late for school supper."

"Well, it's no fault of mine if you are.. I do not transact business after sunset on Saturday, and I object to talking about it even."

Tommy, with a long face and flashing eyes, returned and told us what he said.

The old pumpkin-belly! The idea of his falling back on such a mean excuse. If a man had come to pay him money he would have taken it had it been Sunday.

A bluer set of fellows were never seen. Hungry as wolves and tired as dogs. It was too bad, and how we did curse the mean old rascal.

"We might have expected it," said Dovey.

"Yes; but how hungry I am," said Frank Samborn, wiping his perspiring forehead.

"So are we all. What shall we do?"

"Follow me; I'll show you what we'll do," said Tommy, resolutely.

He started up the street and we followed him without a word,

On the way we met a farmer's son—a jolly, wide-awake fellow whom we often met—by the name of Fred White.

He stopped to chat with us a moment, and we told him of the mean trick that Pray had served us, and his sympathies were at once aroused.

"I'd get even with him, if I were you," said he.

"We intend to. Will you help us?"

"Of course I will. What is it?"

"We're going to steal one of his sheep."

"What will you do with it?"

"Kill it and sell it. He owes us more than the price of a sheep," said Tommy.

"That's so. I'll help you, boys, but I've got an idea that will be better yet. We go and kill the sheep; I can do that for you, and dress it out there in the pasture, after which I will take the carcass and pelt in my cart and carry them to old Pray himself."

"What?"

"Yes, I often sell him a sheep or a calf."

"But he won't buy because it is Saturday night."

"Never you mind, I'll risk that part of it."

"Well, all right, come on," said Tommy.

On reaching the pasture where the sheep was kept, they had no difficulty in catching a fat sheep, and Fred White killed and dressed it in a half of no time, after which they placed it in the wagon and drove around to Pray's house.

We kept well out of sight, and allowed our friend to do the talking.

"Good evening, Mr. Pray, I have got a nice mutton in my wagon just killed. Like to buy it?" he asked.

"Something nice?"

"Just as good as any of your own. Want to raise a little money, and so I thought I'd bring it in to you. Got the pelt here too, and I'll sell carcass and all for two dollars."

A bargain was soon made, the old fraud never bothering himself about its being Saturday night.

The two dollars was paid, and in a few minutes we were all in the wagon again, and being driven to Russel's saloon.

How we did enjoy that hard-earned money. In those days, oysters stews were only twelve cents; and, making White one of our party, we continued to eat until the money was all gone, with the exception of enough to buy each of us a three cent cinnamon cigar.

But the joke we had played on old Pray—the buying of his own mutton gave our spree a spirit which nothing else would. We laughed over the affair heartily, and then, lighting our cigars, we started merrily for home.

We never returned for our money for sawing that wood, and if he is alive to this day, he probably believes that he is two dollars better off on account of our indignation, and I can fancy that he chuckled over the matter while he munched that mutton.

At all events, he never took pains to remind us that he owed us two dollars. But the nickname that night—"Mutton Pray"—clung to him for many years, if it does not still cling to him, although why he was so called was never known until now.

CHAPTER XXII.

TOMMY BOUNCE and his friends are still before our readers.

We were all assembled in Tommy's room one Saturday afternoon, engaged in telling stories, and some very funny ones were told, you may as well believe.

George Dovey told about a bull that his father owned, and who had a bad habit of assisting slow people over fences. He wouldn't molest any one who was walking in the field, but if he could catch them near, or in the act of getting over, then he always wanted to help.

Mr. Dovey had a Dutchman working for him,

and before he became fully acquainted with the bull's funny ways he got fired over the fence several times.

The first time he was thus assailed, he was so taken aback that he hardly knew what had happened to him. He was crossing the pasture where the bull boarded, and when he attempted to get over the fence he was lifted clear of everything and landed on the other side all in a heap, and all in the mud.

Gathering himself up, he turned and faced the bull, who stood on the other side of the fence as though waiting to be thanked.

"Cot for tam! you dinks yourself puddy smard, I subbose, after dot; bud I bade you dot you dond do id again puddy quick," said he, shaking his muddy fist at the animal. "I dare you der do id some more," and he went away jawing double-jointed broken Dutch and English.

But he took precious good care not to give the old bull another chance to see whether he dared do it again.

On another occasion he tossed an Irishman over a fence in about the same manner, and like the Dutchman he was awfully wrathful.

"Bad luck ter yer, ye four-legged, short-horned spaldeen. If yer wanted to wrastle, why the devil didn't ye say so, an' give a man a chance? Oh, by Saint Patrick, but I'm not afraid o' ye, an' I mane what I say; so ye needn't be shakin' yer red head at me—out o' that, ye vagabond! What are ye good fur, anyhow? I wonder does Mr. Dovey kape him here ter help people over the fence? Go 'way ye dirthy baste!" he said, shaking his fist and going to work.

One after another told some story that had happened to them, and so the laugh went round.

Finally, it came Tommy's turn to tell one, and all hands gathered around to hear it.

"Boys," he began, "you know I'm not a very good story teller. I can put up jobs that make stories for other people to tell, but I can't tell them myself."

"Oh, yes, you can. Go ahead," said several of the boys.

"Well, I'll do the best I can; although what I am going to tell you isn't much of a story in itself, but it has the merit of being true, and I had the honor of being one of the innocent actors."

"Innocent!" laughed the party.

"Certainly. Listen. Before I came to Andover, I, like the rest of you, attended another school. In my case, as probably with many of you, I went to a district school awhile; but what I am about to tell you happened at a private school in my village.

The man who owned the school was an old codger by the name of Slather, and he used to slather us fellows, you bet. But he afterwards started another and larger school in the next town, giving it his entire personal attention, while he hired a young, weak-minded fellow by the name of Limber to teach our school.

Poor Limber was rightly named. He was an Englishman, and a regular old-fashioned pedagogue, with old-fashioned clothes which made him look as comical as possible. We soon took his measure, and before he had been there a week we mastered him instead of him mastering us. Such fun as we had, I have never seen anything like it since. We played all sorts of tricks on him, but as he was one of those fellows who believe in ruling by kindness instead of by the Birch, he only gave us a lecture whenever we cut up any of our deviltry with him when, of course, we would all promise to do better in the future. And we did do better!"

"Better tricks, I dare say," put in Dovey.

"Yes," said Tommy, calmly, "we tried hard to improve on them every time. Well, things went on from worse to worse every day, until we never thought of playing hookey for the sake of having some fun, for we could have twice as much of it in school as we could anywhere outside of it. We would put up all sorts of tricks on poor Limber, and ask him all sorts of foolish questions about our lessons, keeping him all the while trying to explain things to us, while we were improving the time cutting up mischief. To tell the truth, if one or two of the boys could get him on a string explaining some nonsensical question, he would become so much absorbed that the rest of the boys could play the very dicken's about the school-room without his attempting to put a stop to it.

"Well, this state of affairs went on, and of course we made no progress with our lessons. It was all fun and no work. Some of the fellows made squirt-guns which they used on each other during school, and whenever Mr. Limber was looking some other way they would give him a sprinkling. We put carpet tacks in his chair, nailed his coat-tails to his chair, hid a skunk in his desk, pulled the chair out from under him and let him sit down on the floor, put tar on his ruler, and, in fact, did everything to him that we could think of, and yet he never offered to flog one of us."

"What jolly times," said Frank Sanborn. "How I wish I had been there."

"So do I," said Dovey.

"Wait awhile until I get through with my story, and then perhaps you will be glad that you were not there."

"Go ahead, let's hear."

"Well, one day two or three of the largest fel-

lows got him to explain something about their lessons, and the rest of us were raising Old Ned about the school-room. It was the largest circus we had ever had there, and we were enjoying it high, you bet, when the door opened and in came old Slather."

"Oh, ho! He caught you then."

"I should say so. And he also caught poor Limber at his school-keeping. The old man stood for a moment utterly confounded. At first he thought it must be recess, but not being the right time for that he began to see what a loose affair his cheap teacher was conducting, and then he was as mad as a wet cat."

"Silence!" he yelled.

"We turned and saw him for the first time, after he had seen much more than we wished.

"Seizing a fellow who had been trying to stand on his head on one of the benches, he went for him horny-handed.

"Then he grabbed another, and warmed him for a moment, and began cuffing and banging right and left until every one of us received something warm at his hands. School came to order in about three shakes of a goat's tail, although it was mighty hard work for us to get down to study right away.

"Then he went for poor Limber, and such a blowing up as he received would make a cow mad. He discharged him on the spot, and recommended him thereafter to confine himself to teaching an infant class of girls; that being in his opinion as much of a task as he could safely assume.

"Well, he got a man to take Limber's place, who went in for snatching us bald-headed every time. He hadn't been there a week before he had every head in school sore from pulling hair. Then we went and had our heads shaved, after which he took to pulling ears, and at the end of another week we looked like a school of young jackasses, our ears had been pulled out so long. He managed to maintain order, but he failed to maintain the school, for we nearly all left and returned to the regular district school."

This narrative on the part of Tommy Bounce was heartily relished by the boys, for it was the first thing of the kind almost that he had ever favored them with. Several other stories were told, and then the question arose, "What shall we do next?"

"Let's have some fun."

"Agreed, but what shall we do?"

"Let's play something on Pike."

"What for?"

"Why, for fun, of course."

"But what? How?"

"Ask Tommy, he knows."

"No, I'll be hanged if I do," replied Tommy.

"What! Can't think of anything more to play on the old janitor? Then I'm going to leave school," said Frank Sanborn, with much disgust in his voice.

"Let's see," said Tommy, putting on his thinking cap.

"I have it," he said, at length.

"What?"

"Don't let's leather Pike to-day."

"Oh, yes; let's have some fun with the old oyster," said Frank Sanborn, who was always ready to pay off an old score.

"Why not?" asked Dovey.

"Because I know something better. Besides, let's give Pike a rest until he plays something on us again."

"Well, all right. What is it?"

"You know old Pray?"

There was a chorus of groans from the boys.

"Well, I know a good game to play on him."

"The old pumpkin belly!"

"Wonder how he liked that mutton?"

"Yes; and I wonder if he don't think it strange, because we never ask him for the pay for sawing that wood?" asked Dovey, whereat they all laughed.

"Well, here is fun. You know he is afraid to take pay in advance for his teams, since he found out that he couldn't collect damages by law if he did; but you know how he always examines the horse and carriage carefully, and makes us pay for the least scar or bruise he can find."

"Yes, indeed, I'll bet we know it."

"Well, let's go and hire a team, have a ride over to Lawrence, and after that you'll see some fun. Is it a go?"

"Yes, yes!"

"All hands pay?" asked Tommy.

"I will," said Dovey.

"And so will I," put in Frank.

As the others didn't appear to have the money to spare, they made no reply.

"Well, I'll tell you how we'll work it. Frank and Dovey and I will go, for we have the money, but the rest of you come down to the stable when we return, and see the fun," said Tommy, and as his word was pretty nearly law with the boys, it was

agreed to, and the three chums started for the stable.

It will be remembered that Mr. Pray kept a livery stable; that he was a constable, undertaker, and a few other things, besides being a mean man.

He had an Irishman working for him by the name of Terry Flaherty, a quiet, good-natured son of the "ould sod." He made Terry do something of nearly everything about his place, although he was supposed to be an hostler, and give his attention entirely to the stable.

Terry, like his race, was very fond of a joke, and on this account he was a great admirer of Tommy Bounce and his friends, since they had frequently furnished him with amusements in various ways.

On reaching the stable they found Terry there alone, just as they expected, it being the old man's hour for taking a nap, and Tommy proceeded to tell Terry the part he was about to play in the little game that they had put up on the old constable.

This being all understood, he harnessed a horse to a two-seated buggy and handed it over to the boys, who got into it and drove gleefully away.

Terry watched them out of sight, wearing a grin that would have made the poorest horse in the stable laugh, could he have seen him.

"Oh, begorra! wella, wella! But thim b'y's is the devil, so they are, especially Tommy. Faith, he's as full of devilment as a far-down Paddy is full of whisky at fair day. Begorra, but I don't wonder they bate the ould man. Sure, he's maner nor a settin' hin, an' chated them out of their arnins at sawin' wood, so he did. Faith, but if it was me chated loike that, I'd tickle his big stomach wid a kick, so I wud."

Terry returned to his work, still wearing that broad and expressive grin on his unshaven mug, and now and then breaking out into a loud laugh as he contemplated the probable fun in store.

The boys had been gone about an hour when Mr. Pray awoke from his afternoon nap, rubbed his eyes, scratched his bald pate, drank a stiff horn of rum, and started for the stable to see how things were getting on, and what had been done in his absence.

"Terry! Terry! where are you?" he growled, as he entered the stable door.

"Here I am, sur," replied Terry.

"Well, what are you doing?"

"Beddin' the horses, sur."

"Bedding fiddlesticks! More like you were laying off asleep," he growled.

"No, sur."

"I don't believe it. I can't trust you out of my sight five minutes."

"Barrin' yer churchmembership an' yer constableship, yer a liar, sur," replied Terry, coming forward, with his Irish up.

"What is that, sir? It is lucky that you made exceptions, or I would show you what is what. Anybody been here?"

"Yes, three b'y's."

"Three boys! Who were they, and what did they want?"

"They were academy b'y's, an' they wanted a team."

"Do you know them?"

"I do. One of them was Dovey, another was Frank, an' another was Tommy Bounce."

"What! Tommy Bounce? The young rascal; and you refused to let them have a team, of course?"

"Of course I did not."

"Great Jericho! Did you let them have a team?" yelled the old man, clenching his fist and going near to where Terry stood.

"I did," was his curt reply.

"If I never get paid for it, I'll take it out of your wages," said Pray, remembering the wood he owed them for sawing and thinking that the turnout had been hired as an offset to it.

"No, yer won't, for ye never tould me not ter lave them have one."

"Great Jericho! What team was it?"

"The sorrel mare an' the double-seated buggy."

"Well, all right, I'll fix 'em," he growled, turning away to a little room where he kept harnesses and his greasy account books. "If there's a flaw on beast or wagon, I'll make 'em pay roundly for it."

"Divil a bit of it," mused Terry, as he again made a grin of his face, and resumed his work.

In the meantime Tommy and his friends were enjoying themselves hugely out on the road. They went to Lawrence, stopped at several places, and finally returned to Andover about dusk.

Just before reaching the village they stopped at a farm-house, where a fellow by the name of Jackson lived as a farmer's boy. They had often met when he attended the district school, and as he was a jovial, whole-souled fellow he became quite a crony with all three of the boys.

After conversing a few moments, during which Tommy told him of the game he wished to play on Mr. Pray, he harnessed up an old rackabones of a



We were enjoying it high, you ost, when the door opened, and in came old Slather.

horse, and getting into an old chaise, he followed them into the village.

Stopping at the Washington Hotel, about half a mile from the stable, they exchanged teams, the three boys getting into the old faded chaise, while Jack took the team belonging to Pray.

This accomplished, Tommy drove the sorry old establishment around into the stable, while Jack followed at a safe distance.

Mr. Pray was there to receive them. Tommy whipped up the old horse and drove him into the stable door at a lively pace, while Pray stood back aghast at the spectacle.

"There you are, Mr. Pray, there is your team, and you can just charge the use of it to us," said Tommy, leaping out, followed by the others.

"Charge it to the wood-pile," said Dovey, as all three of them darted out of the stable and started towards home.

"Here! hi! ho! Stop! This is not my team! Where is my team? Stop thief!" yelled the old man. "Here, Terry, they've swapped teams with somebody. Look at that!" he added, pointing to the rusty turnout.

"Begorra, I should say they had," said Terry, laughing and scratching his head.

"The villains! the thieves! Stop them! Stop thief," he yelled, darting out into the darkness after them.

He yelled as he ran puffing up the street, and in half of no time had the whole town in an uproar and everybody running hither and yon, asking what the matter was.

But the fat constable did not stop to ask. He knew all about it, he thought, and not only was his official reputation at stake, but his personal property as well.

So he puffed and ran, and used his spare wind for shouting "Stop thief!"

In the meantime Jack Frost was quietly acting his part. Just as he saw Pray start out of his stable on a dead run after the boys, he drove up with the right team.

Terry backed the sorry-looking one out of the stable, Jack entered it and drove away, while the delighted Irishman led the sorrel mare into the stable floor, just where the other had stood, after which he started out to join in the chase.

Tommy knew about how far to run, and when he had done this, he stopped, and all three sat down to rest.

In a moment the fat constable and a great crowd of excited citizens came running up to them.

"Ah, here are the scoundrels. Seize 'em," said Pray, making a dive for Tommy, while the others secured Dovey and Frank.

"Hello! What's up?" asked Tommy, coolly

"I'll—I'll let you—you know wha—what's up, you—you scoundrels," said Pray, puffing loudly, and using the last wind he had.

"What is the matter?"

"Matter! you young scapegrace. Where is my horse and buggy?"

"In the stable, of course."

"Yes, where you left it," put in Dovey.

"It's a lie. You have swapped them for an old crow-bait and ark not worth ten dollars."

"We have done nothing of the kind."

"You lie, and I arrest you all."

"Gentlemen, we have done nothing of the kind," said Tommy, appealing to the crowd.

"No; take us back to the stable," said Frank.

Meanwhile several of the academy boys had come upon the scene, and they sent up shouts for the prisoners and groans for the constable.

"Silence!" yelled he. "Don't you suppose I know what I see?"

"No," shouted somebody in the crowd, "not after you have had your afternoon grog."

This made the old fellow hopping mad.

"Take us back and let us prove it."

"Yes, and we will leave it to these people."

"Take them back," said several citizens.

"What! Don't you suppose I know my own team from such a scarecrow as they returned with?" demanded Pray, turning savagely upon them.

"But there may be a mistake. Take them back," the citizens persisted.

"Let them go! *Hi! the old pot-belly!*" shouted the friends of the prisoners.

In truth, things did begin to look a trifle squally, and thinking he would not only have his prisoners more safe, but at the same time convince the citizens that he was right, he concluded to take them back to the stable.

A great crowd followed, and while on the way Tommy took especial pains to acquaint the people regarding the transaction about sawing the wood, and Pray's mean way of avoiding the payment for

it. In fact, he soon had the whole sympathy of the crowd, none of whom loved the constable overmuch, and not one appeared to blame the boys for taking their pay in the ride.

Before they reached the stable, Terry joined the throng and acted just as though he had also been out searching after the fugitives.

Arriving at the stable, the crowd joined in, when, lo! there stood the horse and buggy, apparently just where the boys had left it. Pray was utterly amazed, and his eyes stuck out a foot, as the saying is. What did it mean?

"There is your team," said Tommy, pointing to it.

"Of course it is;" just where we left it," said Dovey, shaking himself from the grasp of the mag who had led him to the place.

"How is this, Mr. Pray?" asked a citizen.

"Oh, I told you he was drunk," shouted a voice.

"Terry, how is it?" asked Pray, faintly, as he released his hold of Tommy and thrust his hands into his pockets.

"Divil a onct de I know," said the Irishman.

"There is evidently a mistake, and you must let the boys go," said another citizen.

"Three cheers for Tommy Bounce!" cried one of his friends, and they were given with a will.

"I—I don't understand it nohow," muttered Pray. "But that is not the team they drove in here but a few minutes ago."

"Ya, ya, ya!" the crowd yelled in derision.

"Go soak your head," cried a single voice, and as he made a dive for them they scattered and ran all the time yelling derisively.

Poor old man Pray! He was the most sorely-puzzled man that was ever seen, and when one of the influential citizens took him aside and soberly informed him that he was drinking too much for the good of his senses or credit he nearly fell down in a fit.

But don't make any mistake regarding Tommy and his friends.

They returned home in high glee, and the joke soon became town talk, adding still another feather to Tommy's cap, making him the champion practical joker of the school.

CHAPTER XXIII.

We have followed Tommy Bounce from a little, toddling boy, step by step, giving accounts of his pranks as child and boy, until he was ready to graduate from school at Andover, and start out upon the world.

He was about seventeen years of age when he left school, and almost for the first time in his life did he find himself in the melting mood, and his eyes dimmed with tears at the thought of parting with the merry fellows in whose company he had enjoyed so much pleasure, and played so many tricks on his enemies.

In fact, there was only one person connected with the school who was really glad that Tommy was going to leave, and that was Pike, the janitor, on whom he had played so many tricks, and so often made a laughing stock of.

But in spite of all the mischief and deviltry with which we have seen him connected, Tommy Bounce proved a good scholar and a favorite with his teachers. He was quick to learn, and even while concocting some trick he would get his lessons perfect, and was seldom imperfect in anything.

He had, therefore, acquired a good English education, and learned enough of Greek and Latin to suffice for the requirements of a mercantile life, which his father had all the while intended him for.

At the final examination of the graduating class, he astonished those who had prophesied that, being the mischief of the school, he would consequently turn out the dunce of the school, for he even surpassed those students who had been remarkable for their quiet, studious habits.

On the evening of the last day at school his friends all gathered in his room for a farewell meeting. But it was not much like the many other meetings that had taken place there, for there was not one of them that did not feel more like crying than laughing, and not a job was put up for anybody, and few were the jokes passed round.

George Dovey was going to take a position in his father's counting-room. Frank Sanborn was going to learn dentistry with his father. Sam Morrill was going to learn the business of printing-ink making with his brother, and some were going in one direction and some in another, although none of them were going to settle very near Tommy Bounce.

His father had a brother in New York, and had made arrangements to have him take Tommy in his store—a hardware store—and learn him the business, with the understanding that he was to succeed him in business eventually.

So the nearest he would be to any of his schoolmates was to Dovey, who would be in Boston, a long distance between the two who had been such close friends as they had been for so long a time.

But the parting that was to take place on the morrow had to be; it was a part of their destiny, and although it made them all sad, they bore up under it like young philosophers.

"Well, fellows," said Tommy, "the best of friends must part, and we can't always be boys, as the girl said. None of you can feel worse than I do at parting with you, for I understand very well that we may never meet each other again. But there is one thing that I feel certain of we shall never forget each other, however old we may grow or whatever fate or fortune may have in store for us."

"That we will not," they all chorused.

"We can never forget the glorious good times we have had here in Andover; never forget our friends, and never be forgotten by our enemies. Pike will remember us to the last, and Daddy Pray will pray with fervent thanks now that we are gone, as he has preyed upon us in the past. But let us pray that he will find his match in some of those who come after us."

"Amen!" shouted the boys.

After Tommy had finished his remarks, Dovey and Frank Sanborn made little speeches, and at about ten o'clock, they all formed in a circle about the room and joining hands, they sang, "Auld Lang Syne" with much feeling, for before it was finished more than every other eye sparkled with a tear, and then they shook hands with friendly warmth and separated.

Boys who have parted from their schoolmates can understand the feelings of those of our friends and heroes with whom we have spent so many happy moments.

The next day they exchanged future addresses, and went in different directions.

Tommy Bounce returned to his home for the purpose of making a short visit before taking his departure for New York.

Of course he received a hearty welcome home by brother, sisters and parents; even Moses and Dinah were delighted.

"Moses, you come heah, now, right 'way," said Dinah, busting about. "Don't stan' dar grinnin' like a mushmelen. Tommy am heah an' we mus' hab a pair ob chickens killed fo' him."

"Bress de Lor', de prodigal son hab return'!" exclaimed Moses.

"Prodigal fiddlesticks; wha' you know 'bout

de bible. I'd like to know. Better go to Sunday school agin if you don' know more dan dat 'bout historical characters. De prodigal son sold his burf-right fo' a mess ob pottage, an' den went away an' boarded wid de hogs. Guess Tommy Bounce habn't been doin' nuffin ob dat kind. Go 'long, an' kill a couple ob fat chickens, an' stop yer queotin' scripter."

Moses obeyed, for he never liked to argue with his wife; if she wasn't right she would make him believe she was, if she had to twine her hands into his gray wool to do it.

Jakey, Tommy's younger brother, who, it will be remembered by the reader of these sketches, had grown considerably, but he was a very solemn, steady boy, evidently cut out for a farmer, following in his father's footsteps. But he was greatly pleased at seeing Tommy once more, for the memory of old tricks and good times came up before him, and in addition to this Tommy told him of all the jolly sprees he had had at Andover.

And his mother, ever loving as most mothers are, had forgotten and forgiven his many pranks, which had occasioned her so much trouble in the past, and made him sit down and tell her all about his school experiences. He seemed to her like a man now, almost, about going out for a battle with the world, and he seemed dearer to her than ever.

His father felt nearly the same way, and he showed him the letters he had lately received from his brother Ebenezer in New York, relative to Tommy's coming with him, and then began a course of good advice regarding how he should conduct himself in the great city; what strange sights and temptations he would encounter, and how to overcome them. All this he spread out before his son without ever having been in a large city himself.

But the old gentleman meant well, especially when he told him that he must be steady and not play tricks on anybody; in fact, he said he hoped he had outgrown that habit, and would now settle down and become a solid business man.

He went on to tell him all about his uncle; what a nice steady old fellow he was; how rich he was; and the prospect he had of succeeding him in business, he being without sons.

In fact, Tommy was talked to so much that he really didn't know but he should be steady and forget his love of fun, for going so far away from home among strangers made him feel very sober for the time being.

But we shall see about that hereafter.

Then he went out where Moses was at work.

"Gosh, but I's mighty glad for to see yer, Massa Tommy," said he.

"Is that so, Moses?"

"Couldn't be no gladder if yer war my own chile, Tommy. Goramighty, Tommy, does you 'member all dem jokes what yer used to play on me? Ya i ya! ya!" he laughed. "Nebber seed a chile so full ob de Ole Scratch in my life, no, nebber;" and again he laughed.

"Weil, Moses, I have given that fun all up now," replied Tommy, soberly.

"Gosh, s'pose yer had ter at school."

"Oh, yes, didn't dare to play any tricks there."

"Spec not, mighty 'tickler I hear."

"Very particular indeed, Moses."

"Got a heap o' larn'in', I 'spec. S'pose yer know enough ter drive a poor colored man like me half crazy. Know putty near as much as de preacher anyhow, I s'pose."

"Oh, no; but I am going to New York to finish my education."

Tommy spoke truer than he thought.

"Finish it! Gosh! I don't b'leve in gibbing a boy so much eddercation. Makes dem hab softnin' ob de brain, I hear. Goin' whar, did you say?" he asked, after a moment's silence.

"To New York."

"New York! 'Pears ter me I hear tell ob dat town. Down Souf, arn't it?"

"Well, yes, a few miles south of this."

"How far am it, Tommy?"

"About five hundred miles."

"Gosh an' snake skins! Five hundred miles! Wa-wa—amn't dar no finnishin' place nearer dan dat?"

"None so good any nearer."

How true he spoke again will be seen hereafter.

Moses was picking the two chickens he had slaughtered in honor of Tommy's return, but he became so astonished at what had been told him that he lay the chicken down and stood looking at Tommy in open-mouthed wonder.

He was soon roused by the voice of his wife.

"I say you, Moses, wha' am yer doin' dar?"

"Undressin' de chickens, Dinah."

"Guess yer playin' wid yer under-jaw de' most. Better hurry up, or I shall come out dar an' reason wid yer."

"All right, Dinah, I's mos' done," said he, again taking up the chicken and going to work.

Tommy had learned something of the art of ven-

triloquism while at school, and having nothing better to do just then, he thought he would practice it a while on Moses and see how it worked. So he threw his voice so that it seemed to be inside of the chicken that was being plucked.

"Quack! I caw!" the chicken seemed to say.

Moses dropped and leaped to his feet.

"What is the matter, Moses?" asked Tommy, with well-feigned wonder.

"Goshermighty! Tommy," he exclaimed.

"What is it?"

"Didn't yer hear dat chicken talk?"

"Talk! A chicken talk without a head!"

"Sartin' fo' shuh. Hear it as plain as I hear you speak dis minit."

"Nonsense, Moses. Guess you must have been at the cider again," said Tommy, laughing.

Moses remembered the jokes that had been played on him on account of Mr. Bounce's hard cider, and so with some nervousness he sat down, and taking up the chicken resumed work.

"Oh, stop!" seemed to come from the chicken.

This time the frightened darkey threw the chicken away, and ran in an opposite direction, and if it had been possible for him to turn white he would have done so.

"What in the world is the matter, Moses?"

"Matter! Did yer hear dat?" he asked, his eyes protruding from his head.

"Hear what?"

"Gosh! Didn't yer hear dat chicken speak dat time? Golly, but dat am 'markable."

"Oh, Moses, you certainly have been drinking. I heard nothing."

Just then Dinah called again.

"Moses am dem chickens done?"

"All—ya—oh, yes almos'," he replied.

"Better hurry up, or I'll come out dar," was her parting warning.

Moses returned cautiously and stood for a moment eyeing that chicken. Finally he took up the other one and began to strip the feathers off.

"Goshermighty! but dat am curus," he mused.

"Oh, don't be foolish, Moses. Suppose Dinah should hear and see you go on this way?"

"Can't help it. I know dat I hear dat dead chicken say, 'Oh, stop!' jus' as plain as I hear Dinah call me."

"Nonsense, said Tommy, laughing.

"I got putty good ears, I tell yer," said he, shaking his woolly head as he worked away.

"Pretty long ones, I guess," said Tommy.

"Oh, you hurt!" the chicken seemed to say.

"Dar! hear dat?" he exclaimed, dropping the bird and turning to Tommy.

"Ah, Moses, you have got 'em bad, and I shall not stay with you any longer," said he, turning to go.

"Hold on, Tommy. If you go I'll go too. Don't catch me stayin' wid dem yer bewitched chickens, nohow."

"Oh, don't be a fool, Moses," said he, turning to meet Jakey who was approaching them.

"Dat's jus' what I's bound not to do," said he, going towards the barn.

Tommy told his brother of the joke he had played on the old darkey, and they had a good laugh over it between them.

Then the anxious voice of old Dinah was heard again.

"Ho, dar, Moses! where am dem chickens?"

"Come pick 'em yourself, I won't," he growled.

"Am dat what you say, honey?" Guess yer want me ter pray wid yer awhile," she said, coming out from the kitchen.

"Better pray wid de debbel, Dinah."

"What am dat you say?"

"Yas, for de debbel am in dem chickens."

"Come heah, Moses," she called pointing to the half-picked chickens. "Come right heah."

Moses approached timidly.

"Do yer see dese yer chickens?"

The two boys drew near to see the fun.

"Yas, I seed 'em, an' I heard 'em too."

"What dat?"

"Dem chickens hab got der heads cut off, habn't dey?" he asked sternly.

"To be shua. What ob it?"

"Well, de debbel am in dem fo' shua, fo' dey talk right at me."

The two boys laughed merrily.

"Moses, I am 'shamed ob you! Hab you turned fool?" she demanded.

"Guess he has been visiting the cider-barrel," suggested Tommy.

"Moses, didn't I tolle yer nebber ter drink any mo' ob dat yer elder?" she asked, shaking her huge fist at him.

"Haint been drinkin' no cider."



"Well, de debbel am in dem chickens fo' shua, fo' dey talk right at me!"

"Don't go fo' ter lie at me, Moses."

"Nebber drunk no cider, I tell yer. Pick up one ob dem chickens, an' see if he don't talk."

"You's almos' a fool, Moses," said Dinah, going and taking up one of the chickens. "Don't heah no talkin' now, do yer?"

"Pick his feeders off; pull him!" said Moses, excitedly.

"Got to be almos' a fool, shua," said Dinah, as she sat down and began picking off the wardrobe of the defunct bird.

Moses stood in wonder and bewilderment, watching his wife and listening to hear the voice.

"Oh, oh! you hurt!" came from the chicken.

Dinah dropped it as quickly as Moses did, and started to her feet.

"Dar, now, dar! What yer think now?" he exclaimed, exultantly.

"Who—who say dat?" she asked, in alarm.

"De chicken. De debbel am in dat chicken, fo' shua. Didn't I tell you so?"

"By gosh! I guess dat am so, Moses," said Dinah edging away.

"Nonsense! you don't know how to pick chickens, that's all," said Jakey, taking up one of them and finishing it. "There, you see I didn't hurt it as you did."

The two awe-stricken darkeys stood with open eyes and mouths, and, when he had finished the second one, he handed them to Dinah, and told her to proceed with her feast.

She took them gingerly and with much reluctance, and she would have refused to do so at all, probably, had not the oys laughed at her fears so fervently. Her heart failed her several times when she was about to put the knife into them to complete their dressing; but they appeared to be thoroughly dead, and were soon disjointed and put into the pot.

Tommy and Jakey went into the kitchen soon after to see if any more fun was to be had with the old lady.

"Well, have they said anything more?" asked Tommy, laughing.

"No, honey; I guess dey am dead fo' shuah by dis time."

"Did they object to being cut up and sent to pot?"

"Oh, no; nebber said a word. Mighty strange, warn't it?" she asked.

"Yes, rather unusual for chickens to talk much after their heads are cut off," said Tommy, and then resorting to his ventriloquism again, he threw his voice into the boiling pot.

"Oh! oh! Let me out! It's awful hot!" came from beneath the pot lid.

"My goodness! Did you hear that?" she asked, starting toward the kitchen door.

Tommy went toward the stove.

"Keep away dar, chile! The debbel am in dat pot, shua!" cried the old woman.

"Let us see," said he, lifting the lid of the pot. "Are you there?" he asked.

"Yes, and it's awful hot," came from the pot.

"Want to come out?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Do you object being made a stew of?"

"Yes, let us out!"

"Well, if I will take you out, will you tell me all you know about Dinah?"

"Yes, I'll tell tell you all about her hooking that turkey the other day."

"Do you hear that, Dinah?" he asked, turning to the astonished woman.

"Dinah did hear, altogether too well."

"It's a lie, Moses took it!" said she, all of a tremble.

Just then Moses came in.

"Well, what else did Moses do?" he asked again, turning to the pot.

"Hooked a ham."

Moses didn't wait to hear particulars, for hearing those chickens still talking, and telling some very unwholesome truths, he made a break for the door and vanished.

"Will you kill them both if they ever steal anything again?"

"Yes; make a stew of them."

Dinah waited to hear no more, but followed her husband as fast as she could go. As she flew out of the house she met Mrs. Bounce, and explained her conduct, together with her determination to have nothing more to do with the chickens. She went to the kitchen to investigate, and there found Tommy and Jakey convulsed with laughter.

"What have you been doing, Tommy?" she asked, for she instantly suspected that he had been up to some of his capers."

Tommy explained the whole affair, and gave her some examples of his art, which soon had her laughing as merrily as they were.

"Tommy, I fear you've not forgotten all your pranks yet. But you must be careful how you cut up when you get to New York, for they put people in jail for joking there,"

But she was obliged to finish that chicken stew herself, for nothing could induce Dinah to go near the pot again. She attempted to explain matters to her after the boys had gone out, but she couldn't understand it now. To her it was nothing short of the devil, and Moses steadily refused to kill a chicken after his strange experience.

Well, a few days passed most pleasantly, and at the end of a week Tommy was driven to the depot where he was to take the cars for New York.

Once on board the train, and spinning along away from home and friends, all his pranks and thoughts of fun forsook him, and he became quite serious.

A new world was about to dawn upon him, and he couldn't help thinking about what it would be like, and whether the battle would be a rough or a pleasant one.

In due time he arrived in New York, a smart but green boy; one who had never lived in a city before, and knew very little about its customs and differences.

His uncle sent a porter down to the boat with a carriage to receive him, and he was quickly taken to the great hardware merchant's store, and there presented to an uncle he had never seen.

Tommy looked a trifle green and awkward, but the old fellow saw at a glance that he was a bright, smart lad, and would soon ripen under the mellowing influences of New York society.

Ebenezer Bounce was a little, short, fat, dumpy man, with a head as bald as a brass kettle, and a large nose, colored in the most expensive way, while as to dress he was slightly old-fashioned; and as to disposition, somewhat given to be petulant and excitable. On the whole he was so very unlike his father, that Tommy could not detect the slightest resemblance, although at first glance he made up his mind that he should like him.

The old chap was sitting in his private office, when the porter brought Tommy in and presented him.

He looked him over from head to foot for a moment without speaking.

"Are you Thomas Bounce?" he asked, at length.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I am your uncle Ebenezer," he said, holding out his hand.

"I am glad to see you," said Tommy, taking his hand.

"How are the folks? Come, sit down here and tell me all about them and all about yourself."

Tommy did as requested, and in the course of half an hour the two Bounces began to like each other immensely.

Tommy thought he had never met a more jolly old rooster, and the old merchant concluded that Tommy was much more like himself than his father, and so he liked him.

In truth, this was really so, Jakey was more like his father, and Tommy was more like his new-found uncle.

After conversing an hour or two, Mr. Bounce went with him to his residence up-town, to a fashionable

part of the city, and introduced him to his wife and three daughters—girls about his own age or a trifle older.

After being made at home in the family he was given a week wherein to see the sights and get acquainted in the city before taking his place in the store, which time he fully improved, it may well be believed.

[THE END.]

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